

**BODY ISSUE**

**4 WEEKS TO PEAK PHYSIQUE**

# Women's health & fitness

**Australia**

SEPTEMBER 2015

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## FLAT TUMMY

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FAST RESULTS

## WORKOUTS

- 7-minute abs
- Phwoar legs supersets

## GREEN SMOOTHIE Guidebook

- Fat loss • Fuel
- Feeling flippin' amazing

## GENE WORKOUTS

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BODY, MINUS  
GUESSWORK

**IS YOUR  
GOAL  
WEIGHT  
TOO LOW?**  
REALITY CHECK  
YOUR MATH





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# YOUR GOAL THIS MONTH IS CONSISTENCY.

- Create your own secret plan of attack, ready to maintain momentum over the winter months. Aim to tick off:
- 10 express workout sessions
- 4 stretch-yoga sessions
- 4 x 40 to 60-minute quality cardio sessions
- 2 family/friends fun sessions
- 4 rest sessions.

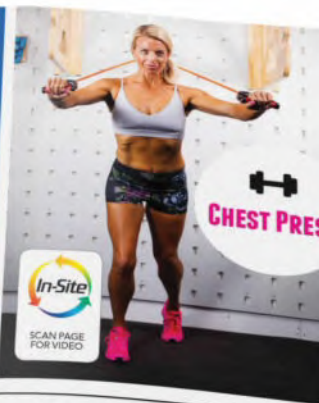
Remember, you don't need fancy equipment: you can do a lot with resistance bands, a chair and a sturdy beam to use as a bar for your pull-ups!

**EXERCISE**  
**TARGET MUSCLES**  
**HOW-TO**

## PULL UP/CHIN UP

Work your back, biceps, forearms. They are THE indication of overall fitness. Anybody who can do a pull-up is in pretty good shape...I'm still working on building mine up and the journey is fun!

**NOTE:** You can do the pull-up exercises at the gym or use suspension bands over a beam or strong rail as well – using resistance bands for assisted pull-ups is a fantastic way to build your strength and your technique. This is an extremely empowering exercise and can get fast results if you persevere.



## CHEST PRESS

The standing chest press strengthens the chest muscles, the pectoralis major and minor, as well as the front fibres of the deltoid shoulder muscle.

- Attach the centre of the band to a stationary object and hold one end in each hand.
- Stand with your back to the attachment, elbows bent and shoulders abducted to 90 degrees (upper arm level with shoulder) so that your hands are next to your chest.
- Push forwards and straighten your arms out in front of you.
- Slowly return to the starting position.

The best way to get better at pull-ups is to do pull-ups. Here is how with our bands: assisted with resistance bands – add these steps Loop a band over the pull-up bar. Place a foot or knee in the band. Complete pull-ups as normal. Step down carefully and release yourself from the bar. Step one foot out first to avoid snap backs.

- **Doing a pull-up:** Tighten your butt and your abs throughout the entire exercise – try not to swing, so slow down the movement. Keep your shoulder blades pinched together and focus on PULLING the bar down with your arms.
- Use the least amount of assistance that you can handle. If you're using an exercise band, try to get a few bands of varying tension so you can decrease the resistance as you get stronger. Soon as you can do three of eight with assistance, move on up and either use the resistance bands or try unassisted. As better you can try one unassisted then go to the next level. It's a great way to master the pull-up, you can do more reps and use bands such as wide and weighted

WORDS AND WORKOUT BY  
FOGGEN-MOORE, PICTURED  
PHOTOGRAPHY: KEITH HARRIS  
GEAR: LULULEMON AND NIKE  
SHOT ON LOCATION AT KULE  
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the days are shorter, the weather is gloomy...don't blame this on the weather. It's a workout that will make winter seem like a blessing. By using the cooler months to get your health and fitness on track, you'll be sweat through on adrenaline, endorphins and a little extra motivation. Best of all, it's super simple and available to make at home. When you improve, simply pump up the resistance to make it harder. Separate lower body and upper body work will help you build muscle and boost your metabolism, integrating as well as you build new points. Next month we will crank up the cardio with a warm-up and napping up for some outdoor/indoor sessions.



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Shape shift

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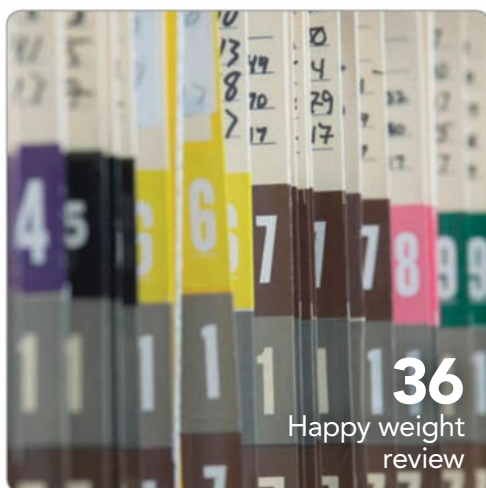
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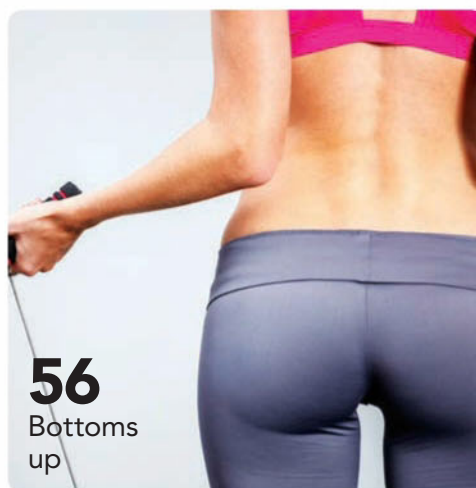
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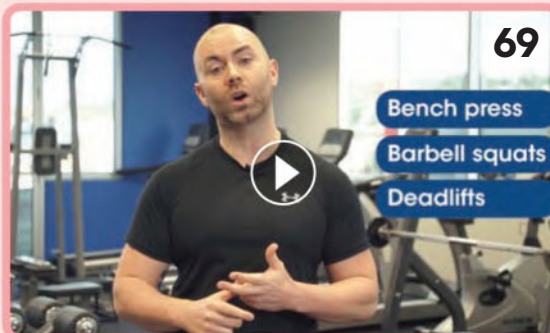
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When it comes to body shape and composition, I'm less of a stickler than you might expect. While I appreciate the hard work, Mensa-grade strategy and discipline it takes to look like a fitness model, I don't give my glutes enough gravitas to schedule them in my iCal. But as my recent experience at a Thai Pilates bootcamp (it should be called core camp) attests, I do have a soft spot for abs – and the closer it gets to spring, the more important getting my mitts on a three-pack seems. It's not a new thing – I've been spending the first part of September googling variations on 'abs quick women' and 'flat abs one week' since google became a verb, and despite the annual parade of fads, I never nailed the formula that tackles the whole midriff equation. Until now. Naturally, there are many ways to purge the junk under the bonnet, but the basic gist is the same. To celebrate our fourth annual body issue (and indulge my somatic parochialism), we've revealed the formula for pre-summer ripples with a guide to finding your baseline with a one-day detox (while you'd think it was safe to assume that what you see first thing in the morning is fact, plenty of common dietary offenders can cause distension, masking what might be a washboard rig), crash course in fat loss science (you might only be two percentage points from popping), gene-based workouts (why waste time on guesswork?) and August cover model Melissa Le Man's seven-minute abs workout. That's less than it takes to nuke a Weight Watchers pizza. It's not all about abs, of course; if you're planning to trade your heels for normcore cut-offs and Air Max 90s this summer, boost your leg esteem with Le Man's express pins workout and Nikki Fogden-Moore's bulk-free cycle program (in spin class or on the beach, it's up to you). This issue also brings the season's weight loss hysteria crashing to terra firma with a reality check on thin ideals and cray goal weights (aiming higher could be the key to keeping it off) as well as a weight loss plan that's so sensible you'll forget you're doing it. In case you can't resist. Also on the topic of imparting rationality, we've stuck the knife in the whole clean eating palaver with sane tips for minimising junk without becoming a martyr. Misery isn't any cooler with a side of organic kale (not just saying, *say-ing*). Speaking of balance, this month's cover model, *WH&F*'s Melbourne-based trainer Sheena-Lauren Steinert, is an exemplar of moderation. Sure, she'll make you work hard, but heck you'll have fun doing it. Watch her workout and tips videos at [womenshealthandfitness.com.au](http://womenshealthandfitness.com.au). Once you're done, don't forget to humblebrag your wins by submitting a gelfie for our raw fitspo board. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for callouts.

Wishing you a month of renewal,

*Rebecca*

Rebecca Long // Editor



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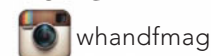
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## MOVE IT



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## SPRING COLD SORE CURE

Spring's abundant sunshine is a double-edged sword. While you get to ditch the cashmere and soak up vit D, exposure to UV radiation increases oxidative stress, which may weaken the immune system and give viruses such as herpes free rein to manifest as cold sores according to experts at ETH Zurich. Supplementing with vitamin E or other liposoluble antioxidants could be useful in conditions encouraging oxidative stress, including pollution, boozing and smoking, researchers posited.

## SKIN CONDITION HINT

Getting to know your body 101. Your eye colour hints at whether you're more likely to develop autoimmune skin condition vitiligo or melanoma. The genes associated with eye colour are also associated with the skin conditions according to a study of 3,000 people led by the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Brown eyes are associated with heightened vitiligo risk while blue peepers synch with greater risk of melanoma – vitiligo's genetic polar opposite according to experts. People at high risk of vitiligo were also susceptible to other autoimmune diseases such as thyroid disease, type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, researchers said.



|  |                     |                       |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
|  | WHITE AMERICANS 27% | VITILIGO PATIENTS 43% |
|  | WHITE AMERICANS 22% | VITILIGO PATIENTS 30% |
|  | WHITE AMERICANS 52% | VITILIGO PATIENTS 27% |

## Sweet HEART

Swilling soft drink instead of water could be a fast track to heart trouble. The excess caffeine and sugar in soft drink have been linked to dangerous dips in electrolyte potassium in a study at Monaco's Princess Grace Hospital Centre. Earlier research found that high-volume cola consumption correlated with hypokalemia, a condition marked by extremely low potassium levels and, often, problematic heart rate patterns. Good news: quitting soft drink was found to restore potassium imbalance.

3.34



The percentage more likely that those who are underweight in middle age are to get dementia than healthy weight peers according to new research published in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* journal. In a study of almost two million people, those with a BMI under 20 at the age of 55 were found to be in the danger zone. Conversely, a BMI classified obese (more than 30) were 30 per cent less likely to develop dementia than healthy weight peers. The jury's out on the reason for the link.

### LEXICON

## Circadian Medicine

The branch of medicine concerned with how circadian rhythms influence disease susceptibility. In a recent study at Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, disrupted light-dark cycles were linked to increased vulnerability to certain diseases.





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## THE QUESTION

### DO CHROMIUM SUPPLEMENTS CRUSH CRAVINGS?

If you feel they do, that's good. But the mechanism by which many claim they cripple hankerings for Kit Kats and jam has not been proven by recent research. In a 30-year analysis published in *Biological Trace Element Research*, the mineral was not found to lower fasting blood sugar in healthy people or diabetics. The blood sugar moderating effect is widely lauded, but there may be other mechanisms that help reduce cravings. Even if it is the placebo effect.



## Tissue injury

If spring means hitting the two-buck shop for a pallet of scratchy tissues and finding your puffer, here's good news. Some seasonal allergies respond to dietary changes according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. Many seasonal allergy sufferers also suffer from pollen food allergy syndrome (also called oral allergy syndrome), which is a cross-reaction between the similar proteins in certain types of fruits, vegetables (and some nuts) and the allergy-causing pollen. One in five people with grass allergies suffer from the condition, which can make lips tingle and cause swelling and itching of the mouth.

**CHECK IT:** Grass allergies may correlate with sensitivity to tomatoes, potatoes or peaches.



## Inflammatory remarks

Zinc your teeth into this. Deficiency of the mineral could compound inflammation involved in chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes according to an Oregon State University study. Zinc was found to affect the immune system's response to inflammation.

**GET IT:** Zinc is found in protein-rich foods such as meat and shellfish (oysters have the highest zinc content). The recommended daily intake of zinc for women is eight mg with an upper limit of 40 mg.

## SUPER SNACKS

While there's some degree of creative licence in the term 'superfoods', there's no such thing as too nutrient dense. Get more bang for your bite with these seeds and fruits on cereal, in smoothies or as a super snack.

**CHIA SEEDS:** High in omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Add them to your smoothie or cereal.

**FLAXSEEDS:** Good source of protein, fibre, antioxidants and phytoestrogens including omega-3 fatty acids. May lower blood cholesterol. Mix them into home-baked bread.

**SUNFLOWER SEEDS:** Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, protein, fibre, vitamin E and phytochemicals, such as smart nutrient choline. Eat them as you would almonds.

**PUMPKIN SEEDS:** High in protein, fibre, manganese, magnesium and phosphorus. Eat alone as a filling snack.

**BLUEBERRIES:** Chockers with fibre, vitamins, minerals and praised for their antioxidant quotient. Daily blueberry

consumption may reduce blood pressure and arterial stiffness. Throw some in Greek yoghurt or porridge.

**ACAI BERRIES:** With a fatty acid ratio similar to olive oil, they may be anti-inflammatory. Mix them into a smoothie.

**TART CHERRIES:** High in antioxidants and linked to enhanced sleep, anti-inflammation and athletic recovery. Perfect in plain yoghurt.

**AVOCADOS:** Heart-healthy monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) with promise for lowering bad cholesterol. Spread on toast, stir through salad or use as a dip for veggie sticks.

**CRANBERRIES:** Found to benefit glycaemic response and urinary tract health. Stir through cereal before adding milk or fold into protein muffins.



The number of grams of dry Froot Loops that caused higher plaque acidity on chompers when chased by a glass of apple juice or water than full-cream milk in research at Chicago College of Dentistry. Washing down sugary brekkie cereal with milk reduces acids produced by bacteria in dental plaque on tooth surfaces, potentially warding off cavities, experts said.







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## Café cool

Filtered water just got hip. The new Fill & Serve water carafe from Brita looks schmick enough to grace the tables of a trendy café while doing the same fab job of filtering your water to fresh and pure perfection as its ugly jug equals. Pick one up for \$34.95 at [brita.com.au](http://brita.com.au)

## 90

The percentage of Australians who would like to snack healthier according to market research by Yoplait. An abundance of sugary snacks means that making a healthy choice can be difficult (and apparently 80 per cent of us feel guilty after noshing on something less than nutritious too). So Yoplait has created a new product with guilt-free snacktime in mind. Their Bon Appetit Greek yoghurt snacks are high in protein, topped up with fresh fruit and only have around 460 kilojoules per serve. Pick one up for \$2.09 at Woolworths or Coles.



## Beauty juice

Ever wondered what good-looking celebrities put in their juice blends? Well, Impressed Juices can give you a pretty good idea. Co-created by ex-Miss Universe competitor, certified health coach and Channel 7 media personality Rachael Finch, the juices are not only a reflection of beautiful people's juicing habits, they're also hand picked for health. "With a busy schedule and a baby, it's nice to know that I have a product loaded with nutrition that I can drink any time - in the morning, at my desk or on a shoot," says Finch. Grab one at Woolworths for \$3.59



## LEXICON Kalettes

'If only kale grew in cute, bite size bunches, instead of colossal, crunchy fronds...' This was the dream behind the creation of Kalettes, a bizarre cross between a Brussels sprout and a kale plant. They look like mini-cabbages and have a fresh, sweet and nutty taste. Get them at Coles.



## Gut feeling

If you're constantly tackling tummy problems, maybe it's time you signed your digestive system up for some serious RnR. For Life Retreats in Byron Bay is an educational foodie escape based on the principles of bio-individuality, movement and holistic wellness proven to boost digestive health. Your 'healing holiday' begins with a 60-minute consultation and follows through with digestive health seminars, movement classes and (of course) with belly-friendly, organic and locally sourced food. Read more at [forliferetreats.com.au](http://forliferetreats.com.au)



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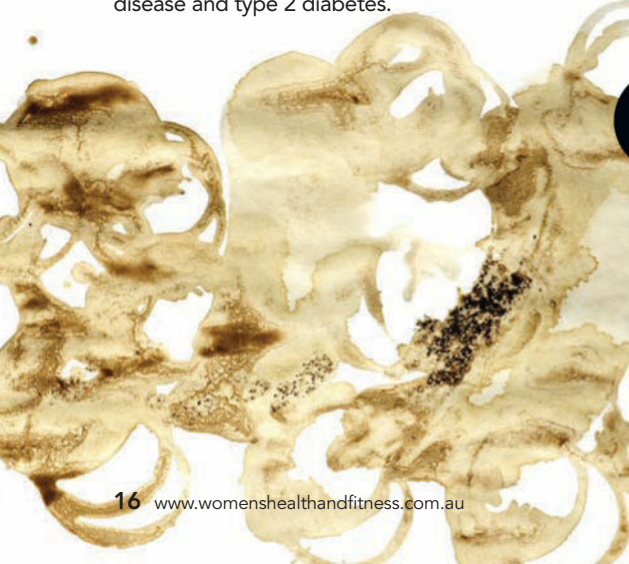




How many more kilos people lost when their largest meal was breakfast than peers who saved their main meal for dinner in a Tel Aviv University study. Allocating the day's biggest caloric load to brekkie appeared to kill night cravings and improve mood and daytime energy (what Ben & Jerry's on the sofa or 3pm Kit Kat?). By end of day, big breakfasters also had lower levels of hunger-inducing hormone ghrelin. Participants on a 1,400-calorie diet who ate their largest meal in the AM lost 7.9 kg over 12 weeks while those who ate a large dinner lost 3.2 kg.

## FIVE

The number of cups of coffee linked to greater retention of fat by cells in an Aussie study denouncing high doses of a compound in the humble cuppa. Polyphenols called CGAs – found in coffee, tea and plums – correlated with greater retention of fat by cells in mice, Western Australian researchers reported. Overweight Minnies who knocked back espressos also showed higher glucose intolerance and insulin resistance than peers. The silver lining? Three to four coffees a day appeared to undermine the risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.



### 3 WAYS

## Resist temptation, without willpower

1

**The glitch:** The buffet birthday dinner

**The fix:** Listen to sentences using inaction words such as 'calm down' or 'stop'.

**The trick:** Listening to subliminal inaction-related words correlated with automatic increases in self-control in a study in journal *Cognition*. Action words like 'run' and 'start', however, had no such effect. It queries the going thinking on 'inhibitory self-control', which was previously thought to require conscious effort.

2

**The glitch:** The Tim Tams in the fridge drawer

**The fix:** Have your other half or housemate hide your (and their) stash

**The trick:** Pre-commitment (geek speak for voluntarily limiting access to temptations). A study in journal *Neuron* found that participants who voluntarily relinquished access to temptations exerted greater self-control than those relying on willpower. Brain activity while subjects made the choice to precommit or not to precommit showed that each tactic activated specific brain regions, with precommitment lighting up the area involved in thinking about the future... oh look, high-waisted jeans.

3

**The glitch:** The fast-food drive-thru

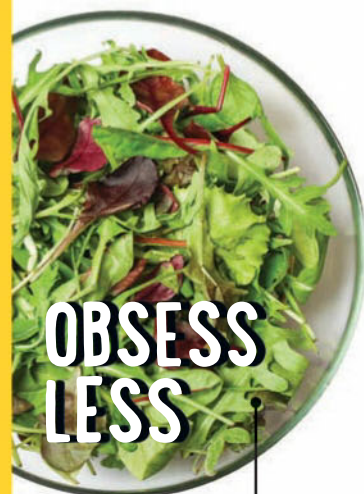
**The fix:** Go to bed earlier

**The trick:** If you can't resist detouring via the drive-thru, audit your shut-eye. A study published in *Nature Communications* suggests a direct link between sleep deficit and increased desire for calorie-dense foods. In healthy young adults, those who had underslept had impaired activity in the brain region involved in complex decision making while the reward centre lit up like a Christmas tree at the thought of high-cal foods. Results also showed that those missing kip had a preference for junk foods.

### LEXICON

#### VLCD

An acronym for very low calorie diet, VLCD prescribes 450 to 800 calories per day – less than half the average woman's requirement of 1,500 to 2,000. Often used in medical settings to reduce weight quickly for operative procedures, VLCDs are often packaged as shakes or meal replacement bars to ensure delivery of adequate nutrients.



## OBSESS LESS

### TRUE OR FALSE?

Not being allowed to have something makes you want it more (cronuts, Stella McCartney leggings, a pony)? Food FOMO (fear of missing out) is that much harder when others don't face the same restrictions according to research reported in *Cognitive, Affective and Behavioral Neuroscience*. Being around people on the same diet page, however, lessened the level of focus on forbidden items. #NotRocketScience





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*Anna Lahey*

Founder & Creative Director

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# THE PULSE / EXERCISE

## 53

The percentage of people who have anxiety about exercising in public because they're worried they don't look good in gym gear according to research from Curves Australia. Taking on your body image woes in a place where muscles, mirrors and tight clothing abound can be tricky, so we asked clinical psychologist and 'gym therapist' Louise Adams for her pro-tips for boosting your body positivity so you can flout your lycra like you mean it:

1

**Choose to exercise in an environment that you feel comfortable in.** If your gym has an appearance focus, it might not be the best place for you. Be somewhere that makes you feel inspired, not ashamed.

**Identify non-appearance related reasons to exercise.**

For example, 'I love how energised I feel after I work out', or 'I like feeling stronger'.

2

**Don't body check – you're at the gym to move your body, not to scrutinise its appearance.**

Be in your body, pay attention to how it feels as it moves rather than checking out the mirror.

3

 **QUICK FIX**

**THE STICK:** Lost mojo. Your self-selected treadmill speed is equivalent to a Sunday stroll and it's about as exciting as...zzzzz...

**THE FIX:** Play tempo-pace synchronised music.

A recent study by Toronto rehab found that "music helps cue the person to take their next step or stride and helps regulate, maintain and reinforce their prescribed exercise pace." Subjects who exercised with tempo music playlists with tempo-pace synchronisation did an average of 105.4 minutes more exercise than those who didn't use music.

**The defendant:** Salt

**The case:** Salt is linked to effective thermoregulation, or the ability to sweat and cool the body down. But does more salt necessarily equate to more sweat and better performance?

**The defence:** Training that causes you to sweat more or for longer periods of time can result in sodium losses that need to be replaced for optimal thermoregulation and performance.

**The verdict:** A recent paper published in the *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine* concluded that increased salt consumption led to no statistical difference in performance. The study

tested 11 endurance athletes over two hours of training in which they lost approximately two litres of water (each) through sweat. The study recommended a maximum sodium consumption of 2300 mg per day.

 **JUDGE AND JURY**

**TRENDING**

## CYCLING

**WALKING IS JUST SO 2005...** According to recent Roy Morgan research, cycling is the new 'in thing'. More than 1.6 million people have taken up life in the bike lane in the last decade, and around seven per cent of those are women. If you're thinking of joining the trend, flick to page 84 for Nikki Fogden-Moore's take on working out on two wheels.



**GOOD TO KNOW**



What do you do when you wake up after a good gym session in a serious state of sore? Throwing ice packs on your throbbing quads after leg day might seem like an excellent idea, but it could yield little or no effect. Fortunately, there's a fairly simple way to tell whether you should add ice or heat:

**IF IT SWELLS...ICE IT.**

"Cold temperatures applied to an injury help constrict, or narrow, the

blood vessels and keep blood from accumulating there, which potentially causes inflammation or swelling that can delay the healing process," says sports medicine physician Dr Cayce Onks.

**IF IT ACHESES...HEAT IT.**

"Heat typically brings blood flow to the area, which provides nutrients that the tissues need for healing," Onks says. "It can also increase the flexibility of tendons and muscles."

PHOTOGRAPHY: THINKSTOCK

**TRY IT**



**Pick your pace and select music with a similar tempo to move to.**



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## ◀ GOOD TO KNOW ▶

### What do you use to apply your foundation?

We asked make-up artist Abbey Dalglish (makeupmediamarketing.com.au) what she thought about different tools you use to put your face on:



**Fingers:** "Never use your fingers," says Dalglish. "This can lead to the spreading of bacteria and breakouts of the skin and no woman on the planet wants that! If you do want to use your fingers, make sure you wash your hands thoroughly first."



**Brush:** "You can use different brushes to blend your foundation more evenly and you can layer it around areas that need more product due to discolouration or redness. Foundation goes on thicker with a brush and you can get it in exactly the right spot."



**Sponge:** "Foundation is thinner with a sponge, but they are great to soften the edges or any marks your fingers or brush have left. They're also perfect for stippling, which is simply dabbing the product on to your face rather than a wiping or smearing motion, so to speak. But a sponge uses more foundation; it will cost you about a bottle of foundation every year just because it soaks it up!"

#### -- PRO TIP --

"Wash your brushes and sponges regularly with a good-quality shampoo. You'd be surprised how full they get with make-up, grime and skin particles. Gross!"

# 30%

The fraction of the cost that you'll pay when you seek plastic surgery overseas instead of in Australia. According to Somnio International Medical Holidays (somniaimedical.com), a reduced cost of living - and therefore a reduced cost in amenities, equipment and wages - means that in some cases patients could save up to 70 per cent when receiving treatments abroad.

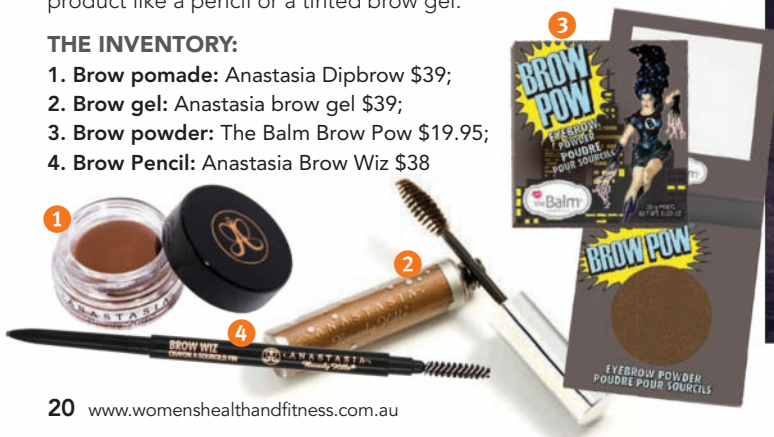
## RAISE YOUR BROWS

Can't seem to keep your arches in check? We asked Samantha Taylor, beauty director of Bellabox (bellabox.com.au), about how to choose your brow products:

"Pick your brow product based on the look you would like to achieve: pencils give great definition and control, powder creates the illusion of fuller brows and brow pomades and gels have great staying power," says Taylor. "If you are keeping it simple for every day, then stick to a quick and easy-to-use product like a pencil or a tinted brow gel."

### THE INVENTORY:

1. **Brow pomade:** Anastasia Dipbrow \$39;
2. **Brow gel:** Anastasia brow gel \$39;
3. **Brow powder:** The Balm Brow Pow \$19.95;
4. **Brow Pencil:** Anastasia Brow Wiz \$38



## LEXICON Threading

If you're not already all over the ancient art of threading, you need to be. This increasingly popular method of removing pesky facial fuzz is great for sensitive skin. It uses no waxes, lotions or chemicals - just a single piece of thread:

"Threading starts with a simple cotton thread, ends held together on each hand and twisted in the middle a number of times," says Mini Sarkissian, founder of Ottoman3 (ottoman3.com.au) "Part of one loop and the twist is then placed on the skin against the direction that the hair is growing, in a straight line; the hand at the opposite end then expands to the other loop, which moves the twist along the brow, removing the hair as it goes. The thread simply plucks the hair, without damaging the skin."





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## ANATOMY 101 >



If you stick your head in the sand about all things reproductive, you're in good company. A Yale School of Medicine study found that 50 per cent of women aged 18 to 40 had never raised reproductive health with a health provider. Almost a third visited a reproductive doc less than once a year or never. Audit your anatomy intel. >

## SEX-WAKE CYCLE

Men who skip sleep are likely to overestimate women's sexual interest and intent according to the Sleep study. Blame their kip-deprived brains. Lack of shut-eye is known to cause frontal lobe impairment, which negatively affects risk-taking sensitivity, inhibition and moral reasoning, authors said.



## Head case

The whole headache excuse thing? Not so funny. About one per cent of adults report experiencing headaches associated with sexual activity (HAS) according to a Loyola University Medical Center neurologist. Women are three to four times less likely than men to incur HAS. While it can be severe and hamper the fun factor, HAS is classified as a form of primary headache, meaning there's usually no serious underlying cause. Ancient Greek doc Hippocrates linked headaches with exercise and sexual activity. Risk reduction tactics include exercising, avoiding excessive alcohol intake and maintaining a healthy weight.

## BODY QUIZ TRUE OR FALSE

- You're more likely to conceive if you have intercourse after ovulation**  
**Consensus:** True according to 90 per cent of respondents  
**Fact:** Just no
- Taking a multivitamin containing folic acid can help to prevent morning sickness**  
**Consensus:** Around half of respondents didn't know  
**Fact:** For women trying to fall pregnant, folic acid is recommended to help prevent birth defects.
- Certain sexual positions – like the pelvis tilt – can aid conception**  
**Consensus:** More than a third gave it the thumbs up  
**Fact:** If only it were that easy
- Irregular periods compromise fertility**  
**Consensus:** A quarter of respondents said this was a furphy  
**Fact:** Factors underlying irregular periods can undermine fertility. Past STIs, smoking and obesity or severe underweight are among anti-bub culprits
- You're just as likely to miscarry at 20 as at 40**  
**Consensus:** About 20 per cent of respondents had no idea  
**Fact:** Miscarriage rates increase with age

**THE STICK:** Convoys with your partner are about as deep as a fishpond (he's not your drycleaner)

**THE FIX:** Watch fluffy love flicks. Discussing movies about relationships with a partner correlated with a 50 per cent lower three-year divorce rate in a study comparing early marriage intervention measures. Research reported in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* revealed that the movie-and-chat approach could be on par with pricey therapy, saying that on-screen love stories made people think about their own behaviour.



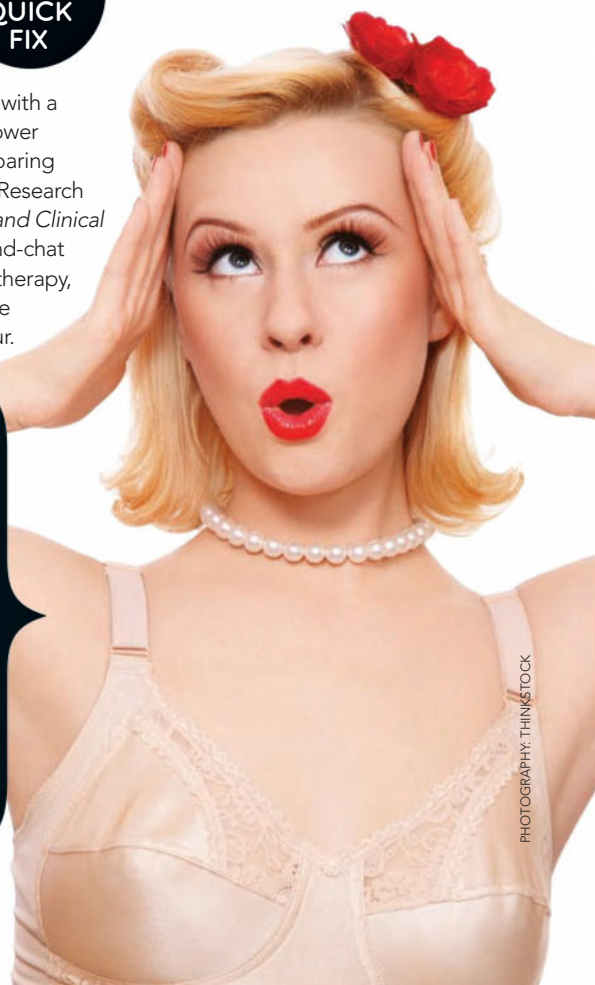
## CHECK IT: HAS

- » Dull ache in the head and neck that begins before orgasm and worsens as arousal increases. Feels like a tension headache.
- » Intense headache that begins during orgasm and can last for hours. A.k.a. thunderclap headache.
- » A noggin ache that occurs after sex and gets worse upon standing.



# 25 PER CENT

That's how likely women taking birth control pills containing less than 20 mcg of synthetic oestrogen were to experience pain during orgasm in an NYU study. It's double the stats for women who don't take the pill. Women taking more than 20 mcg were no more susceptible to pain than pill-free peers. Urological conditions seem to be sensitive to normal cyclic oestrogen fluctuations, researchers said.



PHOTOGRAPHY: THINKSTOCK





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## THE LIST

### Online career change tests

#### Kolbe A Index

**BEST FOR:** A change in environment or organisation type, not necessarily career

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** A 17-page report ranking you from one to 10 in modes of action – quick start, implementor, follow through and fact finder – and translating the numbers to suitable work scenarios (detail-oriented to big-picture thinking). You'll also get an honest appraisal of what doesn't work for you, whether it's a corporate environment or public-facing position. For an extra \$14 you get a 12-page overview of what it's like to work in vocations linked to your strengths.

**COST:** \$63.95 plus \$14 for careers summary.

#### Myers Briggs Type Indicator

**BEST FOR:** Getting to know how the 'you' machine works

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** Based on Jungian psychology distilling personalities into 16 types across four categories including introversion or extroversion, intuiting or sensing and thinking or feeling and perceiving or judging, the test is administered online with results delivered

by phone. The reflection could shed light on what doesn't suit you in your current career and how you might change it to better suit your personality type.

**COST:** \$165

#### MAPP

**BEST FOR:** Sorting out what makes your heart sing

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** A lengthy narrative spanning your motivations (in it for the kudos or driven by compassion?), aptitudes (numbers or words?), reasoning style (micro or macroscopic?). You also receive a list of 20 jobs that may suit and links to a job database and, while it doesn't list Aussie positions, it's an interesting insight into requirements for certain roles.

**COST:** \$19.99

#### The Career key

**BEST FOR:** A dramatic career change

**EXPECT:** Rankings in six areas – realistic, social, investigative, enterprising, artistic, and conventional – and career suggestions related to your strengths.

**COST:** \$9.95

## LEXICON

### SHARENTING

It's one thing for parents to post pics from a nudist retreat on Instagram, but the trend of posting images or blog posts that could later cause kids embarrassment crosses the privacy line according to an analysis of a national poll on children's health in the US. Pics and stories of potty training and pre-school struggles may scar children's digital identities, experts said.

Almost 70 per cent of parents said they use social media to solicit advice from other parents.

## OFFICE HACK

**YOU WANT:** To come up with more creative ideas on the job

**TRY:** Ditching the headphones. Blocking out environmental noise might boost concentration for some, but if you're the kind of person who can't filter external stimuli, you may also be the kind of person whose brain can turn sensory flotsam into useful left-field ideas. According to a new Northwestern University study, creative people's brains may have leaky gating, meaning they soak up and integrate the gazillion bits of ambient sensory info rather than filtering it as irrelevant. In a study assessing neural markers of an early form of attention called sensory gating, reduced ability to screen stimuli from awareness synched with real-world creative achievement.

“The extent to which boredom is propping up the confectionery industry is staggering.”

– Dr Sandi Mann, University of Central Lancashire, published in *The Psychologist*

In a recent experiment, Dr Mann found that people eat chocolate when they're bored at work. Can't kick your deskside chocolate habit? Try reimagining work tasks in a way that inspires you or pitch an idea for something you'd love to do aligned with your KPIs. The boss might just like it.



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## Jagged headache pill

Common pain drug paracetamol could blunt positive emotions.

Sad face. That's the bad news published in journal *Psychological Science*. Previous research has found that paracetamol can inhibit psychological pain, but this is the first link to negating emotional levity. The study of acetaminophen (the active ingredient's US name) found that participants taking 1,000 mg of the drug had a milder emotional response to positive photos an hour later than peers on a placebo. Responses to unpleasant photos also flatlined. It's not yet known whether other types of pain drugs have the same effect.

## LOOK, NO HANDS

Convinced you can blag into your hands-free and drive safely? Half right. While your brain does a decent job of reconciling activities when you're doing a right-hand turn, it's not so good on lefts. According to a study at Toronto's St Michael's Hospital, the part of your noggin in charge of negotiating left-hand corners basically shuts off while you're blagging. Brain imaging during driving simulations showed that left-hand turns at busy intersections required more of the brain's vision and alertness mechanisms than hanging a right as blood detoured to brain regions required for conversation.



## Analyse your writing

If your writing is littered with categorical devices such as prepositions, you're probably a thinker. The words you jot most commonly can reveal a lot about personality, priorities and emotional trends according to a new study scrutinising the language in a play thought to be written by Shakespeare but often attributed to Theobald. That book you're writing? Here's what it says.

### Categorical

(heavy on nouns, articles, and prepositions)

### High

Analytical way of thinking; emotionally distant

### Low

Live in the moment; focused on social matters



**THE STICK:** You've forgotten the first item on your Post-It note by the time you get to the car.

**THE FIX:** When you're jotting to-dos, clench your right hand, which may strengthen memory formation by engaging the left hemisphere according to a study at Montclair State University. To retrieve the content, squeeze your left hand to activate the right hemisphere. Research found that forming fists increases neuronal activity in the frontal lobe of the opposite hemisphere.

## PAINT IT BLACK AND WHITE

Here's a way to tear your want-it brain away from the top shelf Apple watch/blender/leather seats and settle for a cheaper option. Print objects on your wish list in black and white. Colour images of products are more likely to highlight small details at the expense of functionality and price according to new research published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Conversely, black-and-white images help us to see the big picture. It could hark back to how our visual systems evolved. While during the day we needed to know how red an apple was, at night we only needed to know whether that dark patch was a shadow or a lion.



PHOTOGRAPHY: THINKSTOCK



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## Unlock your yoga

Bandhas are a part of Kundalini yoga that refer to the three 'locks' that are practised to keep your *prana* (life force) flowing through your body, but they also have perks for your yoga practice:

**Moola bandha/the root lock:** "Similar to pelvic floor exercises, the rectum is internally drawn upwards and held for a short period," says yogini Linda Novosad (arjuna-yoga.com.au). "Using moola bandha with yoga postures helps build core body strength, enables you to hold the postures longer and protects the low back muscles."

**Uddiyana bandha/abdominal lock:** "This is where the abdominal muscles are lifted upwards, creating a strong core," says Novosad.

**Jalandhara bandha/upward pulling net:** "This bandha is practised by drawing the chin downwards into the chest and drawing it back so the neck stays long and does not round," says Novosad. "It engages and tones the neck muscles."

**Maha bandha/the great lock:** "This utilises all three simultaneously and is generally practised in seated or meditative asanas or some more advanced yoga poses and with different mudras; all three locks are applied together with the breath held out."

**PRO TIP:** "All should be practised individually at first, and then it can be incorporated with the other bandhas, asanas, pranayamas and eventually mudras."

### THE STICK

Yoga pants + downward dog = letting the world know what kind of panties you're wearing (or not wearing...). Eek!

### THE FIX

Grab a pair of Secret Yogi active pants. They've been tested to ensure they're 'downward dog proof' (no camel toes or VPLs here) and are equipped with what is known as 'ass of steel support', meaning they'll stay that way. They also



happen to come in a range of gloriously colourful patterns. Grab some for \$119 at [secretyogi.com.au](http://secretyogi.com.au)

### LEXICON

## MORAL ELEVATION

We believe the technical term is 'warm fuzzies'... Moral elevation has been pinpointed in a recent study published in *Biological Psychology* as a "specific emotional state triggered by witnessing displays of profound virtue and moral beauty". Research has found that moral elevation has a tendency to inspire optimism and altruism, fostering desire to act compassionately towards others.

### TRY IT

Sit down to a movie that's based on heroic, compassionate acts – we're thinking *Up* or *Captain America* – and let the feels flow. To cause moral activation, according to a review published by UC Berkley's the Greater Good Science Center, you first need to witness something sad. But when the moment of heroism or compassion arrives, this sadness is alleviated, resulting in that glowy feeling we love so much and an urge to pay it forward.

# 85

The percentage of people who said they wanted time completely alone and away

from other people according to Pew Internet Research. In an ever-connected society, solitude has become synonymous with loneliness, making it harder to commit to spending time with ourselves. But you should: a paper by San Jose State University observed that when we stop focusing on people and goings-on around us, we are more equipped to delve into our 'meta-cognition', i.e. reflect on our own thoughts and pave the way for clarity of mind, creativity and self fulfilment.



### ♥ LOVING:

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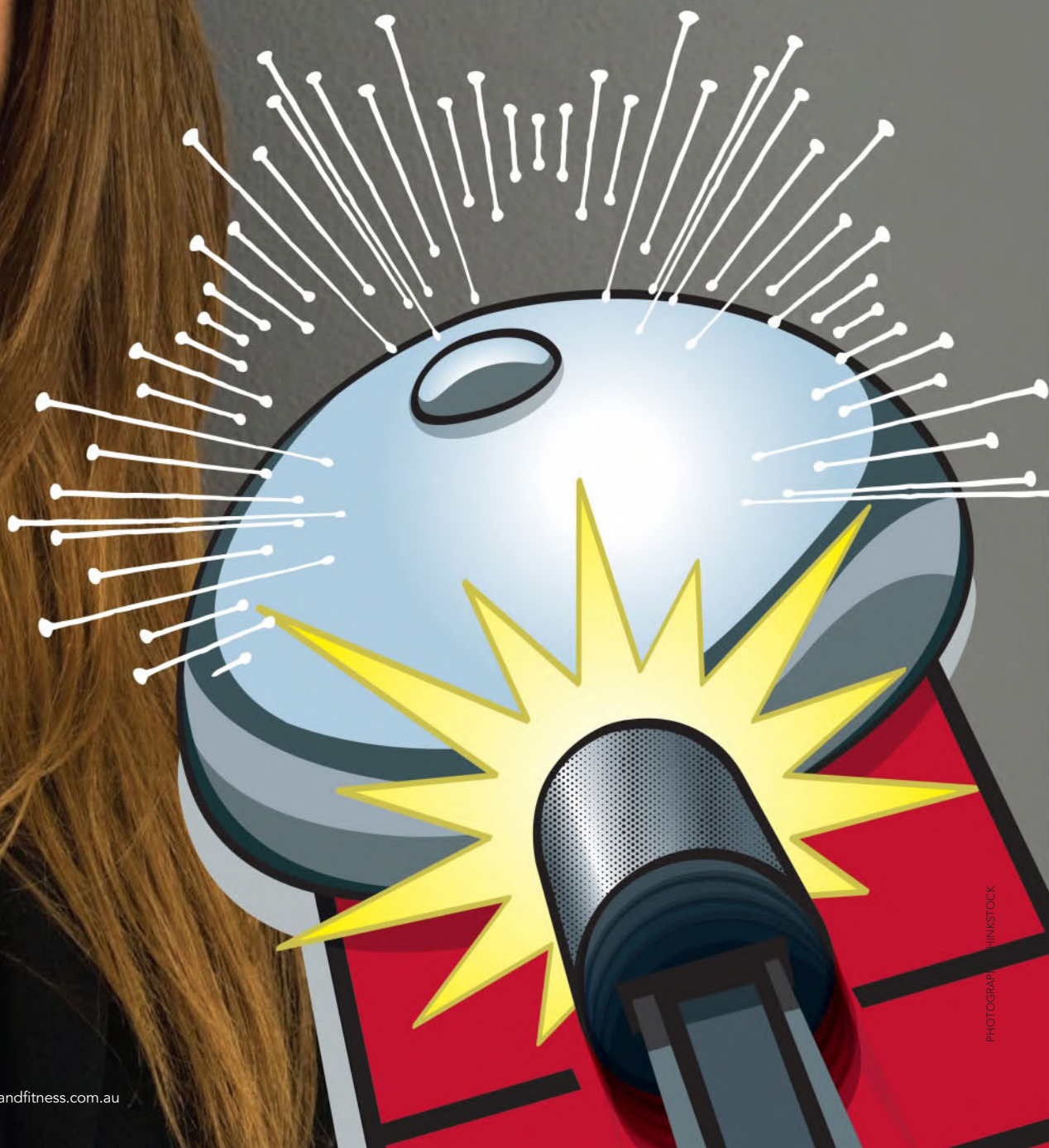
YOUR BEST  
LOVE IT



YOUR BEST >> LOVE IT

# grrrrr

INTERRUPTED



PHOTOGRAPH BY THINKSTOCK



## Are your pre-menstrual symptoms par for the course or indicative of a mental health disorder?

Words: Stephanie Osfield and Rebecca Long

**E**hocolate cravings, feeling like a bad friend, flipping out when the photocopier prints your report the wrong way around...pre-menstrual mood changes are the rule, not the exception, affecting an estimated 75 per cent of women. Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) was first acknowledged as a medical condition in 1953. The most severe symptoms often occur four to 10 days before menstruation and ease as menstrual bleeding begins. "Around 75 per cent of Australian women experience some symptoms of PMS, which may vary from month to month and woman to woman," says Sonia Davison, an endocrinologist and clinical fellow of the Jean Hailes Foundation. "They range from physical side effects like bloating, pimple breakouts, tender breasts, constipation, food cravings and lethargy to emotional impacts including irritability, anxiety, trouble concentrating, mood swings and the desire to withdraw from the world." While garden variety Tim Tam compulsions are troublesome enough, a related and more severe condition called pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is affectionately being dubbed PMS on steroids. "PMDD affects around five per cent of women and may cause symptoms such as extreme anxiety, high levels of aggression and disturbances of blood sugar levels," says Davison.

PMDD was recently granted extra attention in the latest update to psychiatry bible the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V) and has heralded investigations into the role of complex interactions between sex hormones and mood, with researchers suggesting that it might offer clues to why mood disorders are more common in women. PMDD is categorised as a mood disorder characterised by functionally impairing or distressing mood and physical symptoms in the second half of the cycle, known as the luteal phase. Symptoms typically improve once menstruation begins and sufferers experience few or no symptoms the week after their period. The diagnostic criteria have more ifs and buts than a phone and data bundle, but broadly, to qualify, a woman must have experienced at least five of 11 symptoms in most menstrual cycles during the past year, including at least one of markedly depressed mood, feelings of hopelessness, or self-deprecating thoughts; marked anxiety, tension, feelings of being "keyed up" or "on edge"; marked affective lability (e.g. feeling suddenly sad or tearful or experiencing increased sensitivity to rejection) and persistent and marked anger or irritability or increased interpersonal conflicts. Other criteria include severity sufficient to interfere with social, occupational, sexual or scholastic functioning and that symptoms are not attributable to another disorder such as major depressive disorder. The official umbrella term for women who fit the PMDD bill is 'depressive disorder not otherwise specified'.

While recognition of PMDD vindicates extreme pre-menstrual symptoms and the label may reassure sufferers

that they're not being drama queens or losing their minds, alignment with mental illness risks less welcome segues according to director of the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre Professor Jayashri Kulkarni, an expert in how reproductive hormones impact women's mental health. "Acknowledging PMDD as a mental health condition is a step forward and no different from recognising depression or severe anxiety," Prof Kulkarni says. "The difference is that with PMDD, there is a clear pattern of hormones during certain times of the menstrual cycle triggering severe mood responses."

"For some women the symptoms are so severe that they feel overwhelmed or temporarily unable to function normally due to their sudden swinging moods, rage or panic attacks. In rarer cases, the condition has also been linked to psychosis and suicide."

However, the official diagnosis could also marshal stigma and hysterical concern that women could use PMDD as a 'temporary insanity'

defence for everything from stealing a handbag to hit-and-run accidents after road rage. In 1980 and 1981, two famous murder cases did take into account PMDD and a clear pattern of hormonal issues as a mitigating factor.

"The repeated media linkage of these cases to the current acknowledgement of PMDD is an over-reaction that is unhelpful for women," says Prof Kulkarni. "Clearly its recognition as a mental health issue does not mean women are going to go out and suddenly start committing crimes. What it does do is finally recognise that some women have very severe and debilitating responses to hormonal changes."

### PMS Mega

While it's hard to measure where pre-menstrual symptoms lie on a continuum – it's hard to tell whether craving peanut butter and yelling at the neighbour's kids qualifies as dysfunctional – there are very real differences between standard PMS and PMDD. Recent research suggests that the latter may be traced to

## Anxiety: chicken or egg?

While hormone disruption can directly send brain chemistry into a spin, the physical symptoms of hormone imbalance can also contribute to onset of depression and anxiety. New research shows that symptoms of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) strongly predict psychiatric symptoms, with distressing symptoms such as menstrual irregularities, facial hair, weight gain and infertility linked to mental health issues in a study published in *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*. Women with body hair and menstrual problems were most likely to encounter anxiety while those who gained significant weight were most likely to experience hostility. While the study was small and precluded randomised controlled trial conditions, it could suggest more holistic treatment directions. Women with PCOS had distress levels statistically similar to those of female psychiatric patients, authors wrote. PCOS is characterised by excess production of hormone testosterone, irregular ovulation, and cysts in the ovaries.



differences in brain function between PMDD and non-PMDD sufferers. In a small study at Uppsala University, neuroimaging showed that brain activity across the menstrual cycle differs between healthy controls and women with PMDD. When women with PMDD were exposed to emotional stimuli during the follicular phase, they showed higher activation of the brain's amygdala – related to impaired anxiety control – than healthy controls. The brain activity anomaly correlated with very low concentrations of progesterone, suggesting that the amygdalas of PMDD sufferers may be easily tipped over the edge by progesterone, which increases in the early luteal phase, authors said. Researchers also identified a genetic mutation linked to lower activation of the part of the brain that mediates anxiety during the luteal phase in PMDD sufferers.

Sleep hormone melatonin has also been found to play a role in symptoms by altering body rhythms in the 70 per cent of PMDD sufferers who experience poor sleep quality with increased awakenings or excessive sleepiness. A

groundbreaking Douglas Mental Health University Institute study using blood sampling and other physiological monitoring in a highly controlled time-isolation environment showed that PMDD women had significantly decreased melatonin secretion levels during the night compared to healthy controls. They also had a further reduction of melatonin levels during the luteal phase, when symptoms occurred, than in the follicular phase.

That's not to discount the realness of standard PMS. The physiological premiums encountered by PMDD sufferers only compound brain chemistry changes affected by hormonal change. Have female hormones, will be affected. In a study at New York's Cornell University, brain scans of women during peak PMS time showed much greater activity in the frontal lobes – the area that controls emotion. Once menstruation occurred, the high activity in that area of their brain was no longer visible. In short? The changes that occur in PMS are a response to a complex set of reactions and chain reactions involving neurotransmitters and hormones that affect energy, feelings and responses to, well, life.

"Not only do hormones fluctuate throughout a woman's cycle, the rise and fall is substantial," says Davison. "At the start of the menstrual period, there is a very low level of oestrogen, but by mid cycle it has increased tenfold before falling down steeply again just before the next period. Meanwhile, as oestrogen levels are dipping, in the week before menstruation, there is a huge decline in progesterone as well."

Lower oestrogen can favour chaotic pre-menstrual emotions by dropping the levels of mood-boosting hormones like serotonin and dopamine in the brain. Having fewer potent 'feelgood' hormones circulating may explain why many women report feeling less calm and more aggro, sad or unhappy in the lead-up to their period. As a double whammy, there's an ensuing fall in progesterone – which also causes 'endorphin' levels to nosedive. Endorphins are the chemicals

For some women the symptoms are so severe that they feel *overwhelmed or temporarily unable* to function normally due to their sudden swinging moods, rage or panic attacks.

associated with a runner's high because they elevate mood.

Surprisingly, studies show no difference in the hormone levels between women who experience PMS and those who don't. "Where the differences occur is in how these women respond to the hormone changes in their brain," says Davison. "Some have bigger responses to changes in progesterone shifts, while others respond to oestrogen fluctuations. Some women are sensitive to changes from both hormones."

## Period drama

How much do you know about periods? As in, would you know what qualifies as regular – or whether to freak out if you skip one? A menstrual cycle is counted from the first day of one period to the first day of the next on a cycle lasting anywhere from 21 to 35 days. Twenty-eight days is the average, not the rule. If your cycle roughly follows the same timeframe, it's said to be regular. What's not regular is, well, anything other – a late or early period, bleeding between periods and unusually heavy or light periods. But the body's delicate orchestration means

it can throw the odd curve ball. Stress, for instance, can affect the body's normal pattern of hormone signalling, leading to an anomalous or even skipped period. Dr Louise Farrell says one-offs are not cause for concern but that skipping more than one period in a year warrants a doctor's visit to rule out an underlying hormonal imbalance or other condition. Some common causes of irregular menses include significant weight loss or weight gain, endometriosis and polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS).





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# Role Reversal

Feel as though you're the muse in a fairground dunking machine before your period? The following treatments might ease the monthly drama.

## NUTRITION AND SUPPLEMENTS

The first port of call in PMS treatment is supplements, Prof. Kulkarni says. Vitamin B6 and evening primrose Oil, which contains essential fatty acids, have been shown to help alleviate some PMS symptoms, he says. One study published in 2010 found that the combination of magnesium and vitamin B6 was particularly helpful for reducing PMS symptoms. Accredited practising dietitian Melanie McGrice ([melaniemcgrice.com.au](http://melaniemcgrice.com.au)) recommends increasing intake of foods containing these nutrients when you're pre-menstrual. "Nuts are rich in both magnesium and B6, so I'd recommend taking 30 grams of unsalted nuts daily in the week prior to your period," says McGrice. Foods that stabilise blood sugar can also help to regulate mood and energy, Mc Grice says. "Grains that have a low glycaemic index, which means that they provide longer lasting energy, can also help to increase the hormone serotonin in the brain, so try some chickpeas, brown rice or quinoa."

A shortfall in non-heme iron, which comes from plant sources, has been linked to harsher PMS symptoms. Research from the University of Massachusetts found that women with lower non-heme iron – found in silverbeet and spinach, broccoli, bok choy, soy beans and lentils – are 30 to 40 per cent more likely to experience PMS. This is possibly because low iron affects serotonin levels.



## HORMONES

When treating both PMS and PMDD, hormones can help. But not all contraceptive pills are equally effective. "Women should not take older style progesterone pills as these can actually contribute to emotions like anger and depression," cautions Prof Kulkarni. "However, some of the newer varieties of Pill such as Zoely, Diane and Juliet can be very beneficial."

To establish a more stable hormonal pattern, women may take the Pill with the active hormones for three cycles before taking a sugar pill for one week so they only have one week of bleeding within a three-month cycle.

In treatment-resistant cases, Prof Kulkarni suggests other hormone therapy approaches including oestrogen patches to provide the consistent cover of oestradiol (a form of oestrogen) or a combination of oestradiol patches and progesterone. For women who are particularly sensitive to hormones, progesterone may be delivered via Mirena IUD, which is placed in the uterus, delivering hormones directly to surrounding organs rather than passing through the bloodstream, which increases the chance of side effects, Prof Kulkarni says.

An extreme treatment reserved for severe cases in which other therapies have failed is 'chemical menopause', where strong hormones are used to stop ovulation. "This approach sometimes needs to be permanent but can also have a kind of resetting effect on the brain," Prof Kulkarni says. "If women choose to come off the hormones, their impact is usually reversible and even when no longer on the therapy, the hormonal-related moods swings may be greatly reduced."

## MEDITATION

Stress hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol can affect everything from sleep and digestion to thinking and mood, so it makes sense that a stressful job or juggling too many responsibilities could also exacerbate PMS symptoms. Practising stay-calm activities such as meditation from the middle of your cycle until menstruation may fortify against the wrecking ball effects of PMS. Studies show that meditation helps to activate the brain's prefrontal cortex, which is associated with calmer emotions and improved impulse control.

Daily exercise is also crucial for stabilising hormones. Debriefing feelings with a close friend can also help women feel better and supported. A controversial contention is that some women use their PMS time of month as a window to express negative emotions. Jane Ussher, Professor of Women's Health Psychology at University of Western Sydney, caused a storm when she posted this on Australian website The Conversation. "For three weeks of the month, some women silence their irritation and unhappiness, conforming to societal expectations of the 'good woman', says Ussher. She believes that learning to express feelings throughout the month and prioritising self-care instead of always focusing on others' needs can ease PMS distress, citing research showing that women in lesbian relationships report partner empathy and find premenstrual change less distressing.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Abnormal uterine bleeding (AUB) is the medical term for excessive bleeding (greater than 80 ml) or prolonged menstrual bleeding (for more than eight days). About 50 per cent of women with AUB have no known abnormality within the uterus. For the remaining 50 per cent, there is an identifiable cause, such as endometriosis, PCOS, fibroids and polyps. Other indicators include passing clots greater than a 50 cent piece or feeling dizzy. If you think you have AUB, see your doctor.

## ANTIDEPRESSANTS

For women who feel their mood is hijacked by hormones, antidepressants can be an option. "The antidepressants stabilise the level of hormones like serotonin so that some women with PMS or PMDD no longer experience those huge mood swings from hormonal fluctuations," says Davison. A new treatment approach administers antidepressants intermittently. "It may be taken for one week or 10 days of each month when symptoms occur," says Prof Kulkarni. Fresh research suggests that low doses of fluoxetine – better known as the anti-depressant Prozac – could prevent PMS symptoms, which researchers linked to a decline in a by-product of progesterone breakdown, allopregnanolone.

Allopregnanolone acts in the brain as a potent sedative and tranquilising agent. PMS might be a type of drug withdrawal response from an in-built, tranquilising steroid chemical in their brains, researchers from the University of Bristol, UCL and the University of Sao Paulo-Ribeirao Preto reported ahead of human trials. In a study reported in *European Neuropsychopharmacology*, rats given low doses of fluoxetine immediately before their premenstrual period not only exhibited increased allopregnanolone and evaded PMS-like symptoms, but the increase in excitability of brain circuits involved in the stress and fear responses during this phase of the cycle appeared to be blocked by the drug. ■

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# HAPPY WEIGHT REVIEW

Close the gap between  
this and that

Words: David Goding



**H**ands up who's convinced that they weigh something other than what they ought to. It's a contemporary obligation to bemoan a discrepancy between the size or shape our bodies are and one or other ideal. Maintaining this discrepancy is a multi-billion dollar business that props up sales of everything from gym membership to shapewear and weight loss shakes, which means you're unlikely to see many reminders that ultimately said discrepancy is just an idea and no more real than the idea that Brad Pitt would ask you to marry him if only he happened to be at the same bar you were.

The truth about weight is somewhat less exciting yet also less troubling than narratives cultivated around it suggest. To quote a trite Instagram post: "It is what it is." In other words, increasingly, science is siding with the theory that our best weight is that at which our bodies settle when we're eating freely, moving often and exercising moderately. Clothing size is equally rooted in cultural stories and deciding on an ideal is equally futile. Clothing sizes are determined not by an industry standard but the whims and resources of respective brands and factories. The most recent standard, abandoned in 2007, was based on a study of 1920's women last updated in the 1970s by the *Australian Women's Weekly*. Devotedness to dress-size scripture has welcomed a tricky practice known as 'vanity sizing' – the practice of adding a few cheeky centimetres to sizes to flatter the customer into buying a size below the one she'd wear in a competing brand. "Know that the best weight in the fashion world is based on what makes couture clothes sit well and has no correlation to how healthy you are," says Dr Helen Wilcox, a spokesperson for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

Yet in the same way Copernicus was denounced for defying dominant ideology with his revelation that the sun didn't revolve around the earth, the investment most of us have made in the idea and pursuit of an ideal weight means we're unlikely to let it go without a fight. Indeed, the science of BMI (body mass index) proves that there is a very real basis for our beliefs. The tag on that size 10 dress proves that clothing sizes are real. Of course our weight goals aren't as arbitrary or meaningless as a game of Russian roulette. Hell yes, we would be eternally happy and healthy if we weighed the same as Jennifer Hawkins after a colonic – or at least as we weighed at Schoolies. (A-hem.) So far, so unspoilt by reality. Unfortunately for those of us worshipping one or other weight or size, reality bites.

### **BMI v body fat**

The usefulness of body mass index has been grossly overestimated. The result of dividing weight in kilograms by height in metres squared was coined to draw lines in the sand for insurance companies. It was intended for use to establish broad ranges in populations – not pinpoint perfect points for individuals.

"These were compiled originally for life insurance companies who had discovered a link between weight and life span," says Judith Wills, weight control expert and author of *Escape the Fat Trap for Life*.

The healthy weight range spans 18.5 and 24.9 while overweight is above 25 and underweight, below 18. However, it's quite possible to be over the healthy weight range and be incredibly healthy and be in the middle of the healthy zone and be a ticking time bomb. Conversely, someone classified overweight could be in optimal health.

"It is not an accurate gauge of a person's body fat

percentage, a high level of which is more significant than being overweight," says Wills. "One often-quoted example is of the professional bodybuilder or field athlete. Even though he or she may have a body fat percentage much lower than the average, on the scales he or she will probably register a BMI in the overweight category. The reason is a high lean tissue percentage – muscle – which weighs more than fat or bone."

Dr Alan Barclay from the Dietitians Association of Australia says that there are better measures of health and disease risk than BMI.

"BMI is a useful tool for the population but body composition is more important at the individual level. Indicators like waist circumference, skin fold thickness and total body fat give a more complete picture," he says.

Pursuit of lower body fat percentages also obscures truths about body composition. Body fat is both functional and essential – and not all excess fat is bad.

"Fat around the hips, buttocks, and in breasts is healthy for women," says Dr Barclay. "Large amounts of fat around the middle – particularly within the abdomen – is not healthy for women or men."

Recent research suggests that where you store fat is far more important; people who store most of their fat around their waist – otherwise known as apple shapes – are at increased risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. This visceral or intra-abdominal fat coats the major internal organs, releasing disease-forming

fatty acids. Pear shapes carry more chemically stable fat on the hips, thighs and bottom, which is far less likely to cause disease. To be considered 'healthy', women should aim for a waist measurement of less than 80 cm (for men it's 94 cm).

Women with particularly lean physiques could benefit from striving for more – not less – body fat according to author of *The Obesity Paradox* Dr Carl Lavie. "The fact that body fat protects us in a lot of surprising ways – not to mention may help us live long after a grim diagnosis or heart attack – has been quietly circulating in our most prestigious medical

**IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE TO BE OVER THE HEALTHY WEIGHT RANGE AND BE INCREDIBLY HEALTHY AND BE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HEALTHY ZONE AND BE A TICKING TIME BOMB.**





## TOFI APPLE

If you're hanging out in the middle of the healthy BMI range you're laughing, right? Perhaps, but you may also be suffering from 'normal weight obesity, or as some experts call it TOFI – thin outside, fat inside.

"This is when someone's BMI is within the recommended range but the individual has a relatively high proportion of body fat to lean muscle/organ mass, and the excess fat is stored abdominally," says Dr Barclay. "People with this body build may still be at increased risk of metabolic health problems like type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers."

If you think you're TOFI, check with your GP.

literature for the past few years," says Dr Lavie. "And so has the certainty that too much exercise can shorten our life span."

### Set point theory

Set point is the weight at which your body naturally settles under optimal nutrition and movement conditions. If you eat too little or too much, your body will do everything in its power to return you to that point, using mind power tricks, metabolic magic and other devious means available to it. If you could ask your body what your ideal weight is, the set point would be it.

"Our set point is determined by a series of hormonal signals released from our gut, pancreas and fat cells, which travel to the hypothalamus in the brain," says fitness expert Jonathan Bailor, author of *The Calorie Myth*.

"The brain then regulates how much we eat, how many calories we burn, and how much body fat we store long term through various hormones and neurotransmitters. Our set point

weight refers to the level of stored fat our body automatically works to maintain regardless of the quantity of calories we take in or burn off. Our set point explains why it's so hard to keep fat off through traditional diet and exercise techniques.

"It also explains why obese people do not keep getting heavier and heavier until they explode."

While set point fights tooth and nail against change – absorbing extra kilojoules and dialling down energy expenditure to compensate for shortfalls and avoid weight loss – it's not immovable. Yo-yo dieting, poor food choices and consistently eating above or

below your energy needs can adjust your set point up or down. Fortunately, the same malleability applies to a set point you've accidentally pushed higher or lower.

"When it comes to metabolic healing, there are two primary hormones involved: insulin and leptin," Bailor says. "When we feed our body low-quality foods, it becomes unable to effectively respond to these hormones. Without those hormonal 'burn fat' signals, the metabolic processes that otherwise keep us slim do not happen."

### Inflation stations

A pervasive myth that a Christmas splurge or few nights

of takeaway will turn you into the Michelin man is just that – myth. The body's quest for homeostasis means that in the absence of a medical condition or medication that changes the body's regulatory functions, adults' weight is unlikely to soar above its healthy zone.

There is an unfair paradox, however, that draws associations between weight obsession and weight gain. According to psychologist Dr Heidi Heron, trying to tightly control body weight can backfire by fulfilling prophecies and promoting dieting behaviours that create the perfect conditions for overeating.

"If a person is constantly thinking, 'I'm fat', the mind will take that as an order to fulfill. And if a person thinks, 'don't have a biscuit,' I wonder even now what kind of biscuit they just thought of? The mind has to see and think about a biscuit in order to choose not to eat it. And, if it's in the mind, a person will be more likely to crave it and then give in and eat it," Dr Heron says.



Dr Rick Kausman, Butterfly Foundation director and author of *If Not Dieting, Then What*, agrees that focusing on attaining a scale weight or creating a caloric deficit is unhelpful.

"The focus should be on looking after yourself. This is a trap that unfortunately many people around the world have fallen into – thinking that, if only they try hard enough, this is somehow going to help them be healthy, when in fact the evidence is clear now that the opposite occurs," Dr Kausman says. In fact, he says that focusing on weight loss is wont to work against a healthy body and diet. "The more we do things to try and lose weight, if that's our focus, the more likely it is that we're going to end up going up and down in terms of our weight, because we're not focusing on the behaviour."

Dr Kausman says that most people can find their healthiest weight without punitive (or expensive) diet practices. Speaking more gently to yourself, eating mindfully and checking with your body before you eat are among his recommendations. "Ask yourself the simple question, 'I can have this if I want, but do I really feel like it?'" This is key to helping people be more aware and mindful, without feeling deprived."

### Ages of change

The term 'middle-age spread' has been etched into ageing lore, yet unflattering connotations ignore the naturalness of physiological change. Expecting to weigh the same at 30 as 18 is folly according to clinical psychologist Louise Adams from Treat Yourself Well.

"Our body weight at age 18 is for many of us the lightest we have ever been," says Adams. "We may not have stopped growing at that point and may not have reached full maturity. Weight gain as we age is quite normal and body shape and size can change over our lifetime. Sticking to a weight from

# EPIC SCALE FAIL

Whether you're trying to lose baby weight, recently had gastro or are desperately trying to undo the comforting spoils of winter, chances are you've at least thought of jumping on the scales. If you do choose to weigh yourself, clarifying to yourself just what their data means is a good pre-emptive strike against weight-related distress. "Monitoring something is a good idea... If you choose to weigh yourself it's important you understand what weight tells you. It's not just fat changes, but muscle, and from day to day the fluctuations are mostly water and intestinal content differences," says registered nutritionist and accredited practising dietitian Dr Joanna McMillan ([drjoanna.com.au](http://drjoanna.com.au)). Far from being a foolproof gauge of whether you've lost or gained body fat, one or two extra kay-gees can point to fluctuations in water and intestinal content, she says. "There is no point in weighing yourself more than once a week for that reason. If you find you are getting emotionally tied to the response on the scales, ditch the method and instead measure your waist," Dr McMillan says. If you are intent on tracking changes to monitor gym progress or inspire you to maintain healthier eating practices, there are better ways than old-school scales. "Technological advancements have made it possible for (almost) everyone to own a scale that provides a complex body composition breakdown," says dietitian Lyndi Polivnick, who says basic bathroom scales and BMI are poor indicators of health. "Use scales that will tell you your body fat percentage versus your muscle mass. Measures such as resting heart rate, VO2 max (lung capacity), blood cholesterol and pressure, energy levels and happiness are far more informative about a person's health," she says.

many years ago is unrealistic for the vast majority of us. It's similar to remembering how your skin looked as a teenager and expecting the same in middle age."

The other sticking point in weight expectations is that many of us expect that with enough weights training and self-control we can defy the effects of hormonal changes associated with mid life.

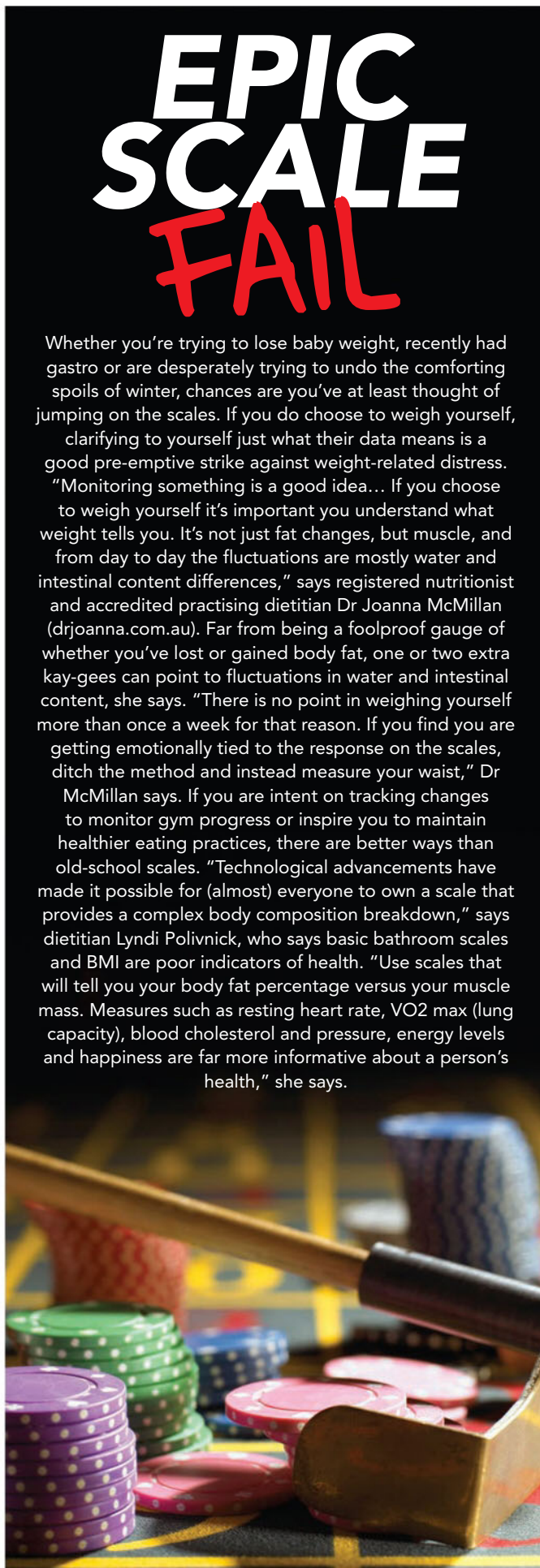
"I think we should be a bit more accepting of carrying a bit of weight as we get older," says the University of Melbourne's Dr Joseph Proietto, a professor of medicine. "There are multiple studies that suggest that a little extra weight can be a healthy thing. In one study we conducted we looked at people who had stents put in their hearts for angina. We found that the underweight people died at a faster rate, and the overweight were better than the normal weight, the mildly obese were better than the overweight in terms of survival."

Dr Lavie encourages a paradigm shift from weight to fitness. "It's much better to strive for fitness and be on the thicker side than to be thin and unfit," he says. "Loss of fitness is a much stronger predictor of mortality than weight gain."

He says the ideal is to exercise 40 to 45 minutes a day, five to six days a week, with plenty of strength work.

"Fitness gurus will tell you that strength training becomes more vital the older one gets, and they are right, for it supports muscle mass like no other form of exercise and can help increase not only strength but also bone mass," says Dr Lavie.


"In most people, muscle strength peaks in our 20s and then gradually decreases. Recent research suggests that women on average will lose muscle mass twice as fast as men the same age, which can make a huge difference in their ability to maintain an ideal weight." ■



YOUR BEST >> LOVE IT







It's one of the most useful yet least considered effects of the human body, but your voice deserves your attennnn-shun. You might want to work on that thing you do with your hands, too.

Words: David Goding

**T**he voice has long been maligned by wisdom that defies action. Latin phrase *acta non verba*, Chet Faker's 'Talk Is Cheap' and even the Nike slogan seem to downplay the importance of vocalisation. In the wired age of hash tags and MMS, perhaps it's not surprising that no one – American Idol judges notwithstanding – talks about the import of voice. But the move away from tone and pitch and emphasis on words per se, minus their golden chariot, disregards fundamental aspects of communication.

Voice is actually a highly versatile instrument that can be cultivated and employed to change the very way we relate to the world and, in turn, the way the world relates to us. Depending on how discriminately it's used, it can work for or against us.

"Research has found that voice and physical use are the most significant indicators of the message and that the verbal component of the message is the least significant," says Lorraine Merritt, leading voice trainer and author of *Talking the Talk*.

Words carry just seven per cent of any message according to Merritt. The voice carries 38 per cent.

What's more, the subtleties surrounding the clarity, volume, provenance and pitch of vocal delivery have very real effects.

"Subconsciously, we're also picking up clues from people's voices. We're picking up their

emotional state, their sexuality, their age, their health, their energy and at the same time they're doing it right back at us," says voice coach Juliet Jordan from The Voice Business.

"Your voice can turn a relationship on or off. It can ingratiate you socially with people or it can create a situation where you're so incomprehensible that people don't want to relate to you."

More than a highly functional tool, voice is inextricably linked to identity. In fact, Jordan forecasts that voice will become a crucial personal stamp in the new tech landscape.

"Our voice is so distinctive that it's being used as identification," says Jordan. "Pretty soon we'll be using our voice to open doors, start our computers and all sorts of things."

Like any physical training, keeping your voice in optimal shape demands concerted training. Here's how to harness yours.

### The voice factory

It emerges like some sort of apparition, yet the voice doesn't come from nowhere.

"It's all determined by your physiology – the size of the voice mechanism that houses the vocal folds, the size of the throat, the size of the larynx and pharynx and also the length, density, mass, dexterity and flexibility of the vocal folds themselves," says voice coach Sandra Baigel, from Voice & Word.

"Then you have the clarity of the voice – how you use the tiny

little organs in the mouth that shape the sound into language. The tongue, teeth, lips, hard and soft palate, even the gum surfaces – they all interact to complete the sound."

Psychological factors can also impact the strength, pitch and persuasive power of the voice.

"A weak tone often happens when you're not feeling very well and haven't got much energy. It's very hard to sound rich when you're feeling worn out," says Jordan. "If you're feeling anxious or nervous, you might talk too fast or with a monotonous tone without realising it. This is you subconsciously trying to hide in public, a bit like a child who puts their hands in front of their face and thinks you can't see them."

Waist belts, spray-on jeans and body position can also help or hinder vocal quality.

"Clothing that is too tight can make your pitch higher," says Jordan. "When women used to wear corsets, they would have a hard time breathing. As a result they tended to speak in a high-pitched voice and pass out a lot."

### Chord cultivation

It tends to be assumed that the voice is something that happens to us, not something we do or even could create (unless we happen to be running for PM or marrying a prince). Like any skill, however, Jordan says leveraging one's voice requires practice.

"Just because you start speaking from an early age

doesn't mean to say that you're very good at it," says Jordan. "It's a learned skill, just like anything, and we don't always learn from the right people. Most of us have learned to speak by copying significant others, such as our mum and dad. If, for instance, they mumbled, then you're likely to mumble as well."

A key part of realising your vocal potential is listening actively to your own voice's tone, pitch and expression and experimenting with them.

"We often don't realise it but most of us have an enormous one-and-a-half to two octaves of

notes or more that are available to us and yet most of us use three to five of those notes when we speak," says Baigel. "Practise allowing your voice to move across the register in order to give light and shade to what you're saying. This gives pictures and textures to the sounds of your words. Practise slowing the pace of your speech and increasing pauses. Also, make sure that your voice comes out of your mouth and doesn't shift to the throat or nose. This can be very distracting from a listener's point of view."

Jordan says conscious use of the voice is particularly important in an era of unprecedented noise and competition for attention.

"As a vocal coach I teach people how to use their voice to go loud and soft, high and low, fast and slow, rich and thin, and that by varying these things you can keep people's attention, which is extremely useful in business as well as in our social lives. Vocal variety is vital in keeping people's attention if you want to have an impact," she says.

Despite cultural shifts towards more casual speech and indeed workplaces, enunciation

remains important. "You should also learn to articulate your words with your mouth to the point where other people can clearly read your lips."

The voice can be used to persuade, seduce, hypnotise or provoke. In the wrong hands it has been used to launch wars and commit innocent people to prison.

"Once you unleash the power of your voice, it can open so many doors," says Jordan. "It helps to build relationships with people across the board. People find it much easier to relate to you if they find you engaging and clearly understand what you are saying."

It's a potent tool in women's career arsenals, she says. "For women, you're likely to be taken more seriously, particularly in a business sense, if you speak slower and lower in pitch, with slightly increased volume."

Margaret Thatcher practised for years to perfect the low, authoritative voice that became her signature. Importantly, she never ended sentences with an upward inflection.

"I call it the Kylie syndrome," says Jordan. "It makes everything sound like a question rather than a statement, which is not the message you want to be sending out."

For parents, lowering your pitch can also express authority and establish boundaries.

"Most mothers when they get anxious tend to get higher pitched and scream at their kids," says Jordan. "This is not very effective. One of the cleverest things is to take a good breath, stop, and speak quite low and the child is usually taken by surprise and stops. It can really help to de-escalate a conflict."

In a confrontation with a partner or colleague, one of the most effective methods is known as the 'pace and lead' technique.

"If a person is upset or angry and talking really fast at you, the best thing to do is to talk back

at the same pace for about three seconds, even if it's completely different from how you normally talk, and then slow down as you talk," says Jordan. "You'll find that the other person will slow down with you. They can't help but follow you. Subconsciously they get hooked."

"We teach the same techniques to people who man rescue and emergency centres. If someone is in a bushfire situation, for instance, and they've called the rescue centre, they don't want you to lose your cool, but they don't want you to be super-cool either. They need to feel like you understand what they're going through, and then you can help to calm them down by slowing the pace. It's very effective."

## Talk therapy

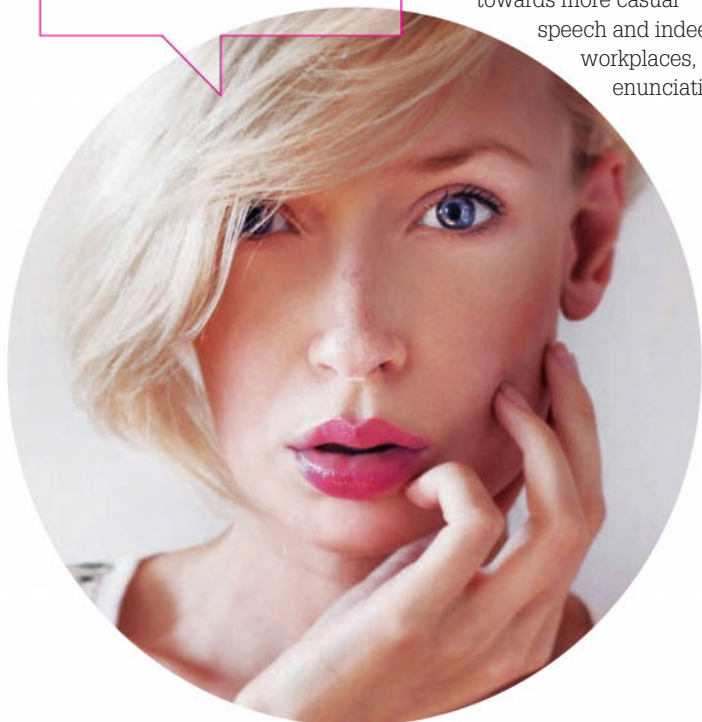
At more than \$100 a session, voice coaching isn't cheap. However, it can be a worthy investment. "Confidence can be a big issue and one of the biggest reasons people see a voice coach," says Baigel. "A lot of the time it's people who have great depth of understanding of their subject matter in their organisation but they want to let that carry through into their voice. They want to use their voice as part of their presence."

"Often the person identifies a problem or deficiency within themselves or sometimes a manager will recommend they see a voice coach – maybe they can't be heard or can't be understood clearly or they speak too quickly, and because of that they lack credibility."

A series of one-on-one sessions is usually recommended.

"I usually say six to eight sessions to see significant change, but it depends on the person," says Doyle. "In their first week I might just give them a few tips and tell them to watch their Ts and Ds – which people often leave off the end of words – and get them to slow down and increase their volume

VOCAL VARIETY IS VITAL IN KEEPING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION IF YOU WANT TO HAVE AN IMPACT







## 10-MINUTE TUTE

# BODY LANGUAGE

### ► Practise

It might sound silly, but it's worth practising speaking in front of a mirror to make sure that your facial expressions and body language match what you're saying. If you're practising before an interview or a speech, it's also helpful to record yourself and watch the video to make sure that you're aware of your facial expressions.

### ► Witness

One interesting experiment is to record yourself speaking, then watch the video with the sound turned off. What does your face and your body language convey when you don't have the benefit of listening to the words?

### ► Move

It's also important to be aware of how close you stand to other people. Getting too close can make people feel uncomfortable. Instead of cramping their personal space, show you're engaged by turning your whole body, including your feet, towards the person.

### ► Mimic

Conventional wisdom holds that you should mirror the body language of the person you're speaking to, but subtlety is key – and even then, only when it makes sense, as in when someone leans in to share a confidence or smiles and nods during interaction.

### ► Speak

If you need to use body language that might be interpreted incorrectly, commentate. For example, if you're genuinely cold and need to cross your arms to warm up, say, "I'm really cold!" This insures against transmitting the wrong message.

## VOICE

- Hold a pen or toothbrush between your teeth with support from your hand if necessary. Continue to hold it as you move your mouth and talk. This exercises the muscles of the mouth and encourages you to speak clearly.
- Sing a 'sliding scale' with a 'naaahh' sound from your highest pitch to your lowest to explore your full vocal range.

- Record yourself. Get used to hearing yourself on tape. Focus on your strengths and work at improving aspects you don't like. Give yourself licence to experiment.
- Avoid tight-fitting clothes and high heels. Tight clothes compromise breathing and high heels compromise posture. Both affect the voice.
- Practise relaxation techniques.

Tension is the enemy of your natural voice. Practise meditation, yoga, whatever it takes to calm your body and breath.

- Read aloud whenever you can. Read to your partner, your kids, to yourself. Vary tone and pitch and make it as compelling as you can.
- Join a theatre group or Toastmasters to show off your new voice and push it to new heights.

## AS WITH SPEECH, YOU CAN LEARN TO USE YOUR BODY LANGUAGE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE



a bit, just to get them started.”

In session two, expect homework including exercises and breathing techniques to practise. Exercises can include working on a poem or monologue and taping the practise. A coach can then help you to clarify what your ideal voice would sound like and engineer coaching to suit.

“The greatest thing you get from voice coaching is the feeling of knowing that you know,” Jordan says. “Most people have no idea how their voice works and what they can do with it.”

### Non-verbal lingo

There is a whole lot more to conveying the contents of mind in a way someone else understands than voice. Fifty-five per cent of the message not accounted for by words or voice is articulated by the body.

If you’ve ever spent time with babies who have not yet developed speech, or older children with disabilities that prevent them from using traditional forms of communication, you will have witnessed that even without the benefit of speech, humans manage to convey their feelings. Non-verbal communication is so important

to survival that we start using it from birth. In daily life we use it constantly – far more than we use words. Experts estimate that between 50 and 80 per cent of our communication is non-verbal, through body language. Which makes the fact that much of our silent lingo is subconscious a bit like carrying a hand grenade in your handbag – relying on luck and instinct to create connections, diffuse conflict and create impressions.

The interpretation of body language is known as ‘kinesics’. It comprises many factors, including how we position ourselves in relation to others, facial expressions, how our eyes move and focus and how we gesture and use our hands and arms.

Some body language can be easily faked – a firm handshake and direct eye contact, say – but it’s difficult for anyone to maintain fake body language for an extended period – which is why body language can be more telling than words. Think about the time you laughed at a friend’s joke but didn’t make eye contact. Was your laugh genuine or were you trying not to offend her? How about the time you spoke with confidence during an interview but

couldn’t stop fiddling with your fingers. Every tic tells a story.

### Body control

Unlike speech, the delivery of body language is so automatic we often are unaware of what our bodies are doing during an interaction. You might be transmitting messages you neither need, nor particularly want to. Yet as with speech, you can learn to use your body language to your advantage and become more body-lingo literate. *The Definitive Book of Body Language: How to Read Others’ Attitudes by Their Gestures* by Allan Pease, also known as Mr Body Language, has introduced micro-expressions – the tiny, quick facial expressions that people typically make when they are attempting to hide their feelings – to the self-help sphere. Micro-expressions are involuntary and extremely difficult to control, which makes them an excellent indicator of what people truly think and feel. It is now not uncommon for people to assume that someone who is looking to the right is lying, while someone looking to the left is telling the truth. Unfortunately, it’s not always that simple, since our body language also draws meaning

from context (if it’s cold, of course we’re grimacing and crossing our arms; it doesn’t mean we’re angry).

Despite nuance, the study of body language has distilled the broad principles into usable tutelage. Take a situation in which you need to build rapport, quickly. Start by mimicking the other person’s body language (think subtle, we’re not playing charades). Couple that with a tilted head to signal interest and understanding. Be aware that talk is cheap – body language can easily undermine a word-perfect convo, leading to that awkward “excuse me, I’ve just seen my friend”. Likewise, all the mirroring and nodding in the world won’t work if other parts of your body are giving opposing signals. Constantly shifting your focus elsewhere or pointing your feet away from the other person sends a loud, clear message that you’d rather be somewhere else. The same basic framework applies to other interpersonal relations in which you hope to persuade another. Dodging a parking fine, for instance, demands rapid establishment of common ground – as does swinging a refund when you’ve already worn the dress. ■

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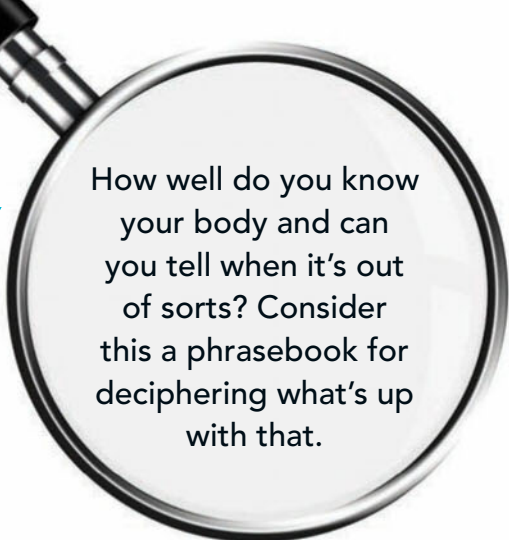
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# Anatomy Code



How well do you know your body and can you tell when it's out of sorts? Consider this a phrasebook for deciphering what's up with that.



**W**omen are notorious for putting up with physiological niggles. The sacrificial cliché is nowhere more manifest than in our reluctance to slow down or see a doc.

"Sometimes we are aware that we're sick, but think we don't have the energy to deal with the consequences,

we're frightened of the outcome, or we just find things too embarrassing," says The Royal Women's Hospital's Dr Ines Rio, who contributed to the hospital's *The Women's Health Book*.

As with most avoidance, however, sticking your head in the sand can be false economy of the six-weeks-off-work-with-a-secondary-infection kind.

## Every time you laugh, you cry

Painful sores in the mouth aren't generally cause for concern; mouth ulcers are common and can be a manifestation of the herpes virus (cold sores) or a common-yet-mysterious aphthous ulcer, which is not considered worrisome. Key conditions known to cause mouth sores are deficiencies of vitamin B12 and folic acid. Taking anti-inflammatories can also invite mouth sores. If sores consistently present or persist, or if discomfort worsens, it's worth ruling out thrush or an STI as well as autoimmune conditions such as Crohn's. "If it's so bad that you can't swallow, if there's a possibility it's because of an STI, you have frequent attacks of mouth ulcers or if a normal ulcer hasn't gone away in two weeks, see your doctor," says Dr Rio.

## YOU'VE DROPPED TWO DRESS SIZES WITHOUT TRYING

While losing weight sounds like a blessing, if you haven't changed your exercise habits or suffered a dehydrating illness such as gastro or food poisoning, there could be cause for concern.

Depression, anxiety, an overactive thyroid, or problems with your immune system, kidneys or pancreas can all cause weight loss. If you've lost 10 per cent of your body weight and have other

symptoms such as a persistent cough, bleeding from the bowel or a stinging throat, cancer is something to rule out.

"Cancers produce chemicals that can interfere with your appetite, or the cancer itself can be in a position that causes pain, depressing the appetite," explains professor Ian Olver, oncologist and CEO of Cancer Council Australia.



## YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'VE JUST RUN 10 KM (AND HAVEN'T)

Stress and anxiety can tighten the muscles that help you breathe, which leads to discomfort, putting more strain on your respiratory rate and possibly eliciting a panic attack according to Brisbane clinical psychologist Tracey Veivers. If breathing difficulties and possibly peripheral symptoms such as a racing heart, tight chest, dizziness, trembling and muscle tension arrive spontaneously – whether or not you consciously feel stressed or anxious – a first port of call is engaging the relaxation response, Veivers says. “Apply strategies of mindfulness to combat your stress and anxiety,” Veivers says. Untreated, frequent and prolonged panic attacks can lead to a panic disorder. In the shorter term, shortness of breath can exert pressure on cardiac and brain function. If it doesn't resolve, rule out asthma, diabetes and a heart complaint.

## You're bloated (and have tried every trick on p. 100)

Food baby? Underlying causes of bloating can be distinctly unfunny. While everyday slip-ups such as hitting the vegie bar a little too hard or encountering pre-menstrual hormone shifts can relax the muscle in your bowel, causing food to travel more slowly and gas to build up, there may be more serious causes. “Watch your diet, take probiotics such as natural yoghurt, and give up carbonated drinks,” suggests Canberra-based gynaecologist and obstetrician Professor Steve Robson. If eliminating obvious suspects doesn't flatten you out, ask your GP to rule out bowel disease. The worst case is ovarian tumours.

## Your elbows are flakier than a snow dome

After winter, skin is often a bit dry – especially elbows and hands. However, a constant build-up of skin cells can point to a more serious dermatological complaint such as psoriasis – which is actually an autoimmune condition in which the body produces too many skin cells at lightning speed, culminating in crusts or plaques. Eczema is the other key cause of dryness according to Sydney Skin dermatologist Dr Li-Chuen Wong.

Eczema usually needs a regular lather of moisturising cream and topical steroids

when inflamed. Mild psoriasis can be treated with topical steroids while treatment-resistant psoriasis may require light therapy and – in severe cases – immunosuppressant pharmaceuticals. Dry skin can also signify nutrient deficiencies, so it may be worth asking the GP for a set of bloods and correcting any shortfalls. Otherwise no amount of cream will overcome your body's compensations for the missing goodness.

## You've got more sores than a primary school kid

The most common cause of recurrent breakouts of sores is being run down or taking medications that suppress your immune system. “Medications such as Roaccutane, used to treat acne, and rare skin conditions such as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome [a connective tissue disorder] can also lead to slow-healing wounds,” says Dr Wong.

Slow wound healing can also indicate dietary deficiencies (zinc is an obvious culprit) and macronutrient shortfalls. Protein is integral to tissue repair while fats help to create cell membranes, and carbs give the body energy to use, enabling the body to direct protein to wounds to aid repair.

## You bleed mid-cycle

While many women's periods arrive a day or a few either side

of their ETA, full-on bleeding mid-cycle isn't normal. It's a particular concern if it happens for more than two cycles according to Prof Robson, who is also the vice president of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. It's cause to be alert, but not alarmed, he says, since random bleeding can mean normal hormones have momentarily made the surface of your cervix more fragile, or that the pill you take has led to breakthrough bleeding. “However, it is always important to rule out infections such as chlamydia and other sexually transmitted diseases, and cancer, particularly of the cervix,” Prof Robson says.

## You spill your (non-alcoholic) drinks

If you're a serious coffee or cola fiend, the good drug could be the problem; caffeine stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, which can cause shakes. Paradoxically, if you've sworn off the bean, shakes could signal withdrawal. “It is common for women to experience the shakes as a symptom of intoxication or withdrawal,” says Dr Rio, head of the Royal Women's Hospital

GP liaison unit. Severe anger and anxiety can also cause trembling hands. A less common catalyst is thyroid overactivity, which often also elicits weight loss, diarrhoea and heart palpitations. If you came up empty for common causes, the doc should rule out multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's or stroke.

## Food passes through you like a goldfish through a lobster net

If you've eaten seafood, it's not hard to join the dots to food poisoning, which often passes without intervention (although electrolyte drinks are a good idea to ameliorate the effects of dehydration). Diarrhoea for no discernable reason could instead point to a food intolerance or diet-related immune disorder such as coeliac disease – or irritable bowel syndrome. If you're under significant stress, IBS becomes more likely. Less likely but possible, an overactive thyroid and bowel cancer can cause erratic bowel habits, Dr Rio says.

## You can't see your rear view in the bathroom mirror

Musculoskeletal back and neck issues are among the most common symptoms overlooked by women, says Dr Rio. A locked neck or back usually means something's out of place or pressing on a nerve; debilitating pain or impeded range of movement is not normal. Often it means your body has finally had enough of compensating for something like a shortened trapezius (an effect of craning forward at a computer for years, which can cause neck muscles to cover its shift despite being ill-equipped to do so). Eventually this puts pressure on other joints, interrupting the whole machine. A physiotherapist is best equipped to deal with joint dysfunction, but if symptoms are accompanied by tingling in hands and feet or bladder or bowel dysfunction, see your GP. ■

## YOU FALL ASLEEP AT YOUR DESK

Excessive fatigue not explained by sleep deficits can signal a sleep disturbance such as sleep apnoea, which precludes requisite sleep quality and quantity and can have knock-on effects including metabolic diseases if left untreated. Anaemia is another common cause of fatigue and can cause incremental damage without intervention. If you're struggling to get up or stay up during the day and haven't been pulling all-nighters, get your blood work done and rule out a blood count drop induced by tumours.



Science has made it possible to preview genetic fate, but how reliable are its forecasts and would you want to know whether you were likely to get cancer?

Words: Jennifer Harbottle

**H**ow likely are you to develop breast or ovarian cancer? Most women would shrug – then possibly worry that their body's a ticking time bomb. There might be a question of whether you'd want to know what fate had in store anyway. Yet greater awareness of genetic faults related to gestation of certain cancers and links to family history have heralded a wave of medical fortune telling and, in some cases, pre-emptive surgery.

Without intervention, women who carry a faulty BRCA1 gene have a markedly increased risk of developing breast and ovarian

cancer. The most extreme pre-emptive strike is a double mastectomy and removal of other sites vulnerable to the cancers – the fallopian tubes and ovaries. For women who do have the gene glitch, removing these sites before the age of 40 drastically reduces the risk of disease. According to Dr Gregory Gard, a certified gynaecological oncologist and senior staff specialist at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, it is now known that most ovarian cancers arise in the fallopian tube, not the ovary itself.

While excitement about scientific advances and attention surrounding Angelina Jolie's

pre-emptive double mastectomy after discovering she had the fault have piqued some panic, the incidence of BRCA is low. Around one in 800 Australian women carry a BRCA gene fault – and only one in five of those elects to have pre-emptive breast surgery. More opt for removal of the fallopian tubes.

#### Gene scene

Everyone is born with two copies of the BRCA1 gene and two copies of the BRCA2 gene. Normally, these are healthy and act as cancer protection genes, but one in every 800 women will inherit a faulty copy of one of these genes from a parent. This

biological bequest increases the risk of developing breast cancer to between 60 and 80 per cent. The probability of developing cancer in the ovaries or fallopian tubes rises to 40 to 60 per cent according to Associate Professor Judy Kirk, a specialist in cancer genetics at Sydney's Westmead Hospital. Currently, the best way to find out how likely it is that you carry a BRCA gene mutation is scrutinising family medical history, Dr Kirk says. A strong family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer on either the maternal or paternal side can – but doesn't always – indicate higher risk. Family history is part of a process of filtering those with





very low risk from genetic testing, which is expensive, complex and protracted. If you do have a family history, a GP can refer you to a family cancer clinic for advice about genetic testing for family members – starting with taking blood from a family member with cancer to find out whether they have a culpable gene fault. If they do have a fault, family members can be tested to see whether they've inherited it. BRCA gene faults can be passed down by both females and males.

"Sometimes, even in the families with the strongest medical history, we can't always find the genetic cause of cancers and the results aren't meaningful enough to take action," says Dr Kirk. "We still don't always understand why in some families for instance, one sister will develop breast cancer at 30 years old and another sister will never get it."

According to Dr Kathy Tucker, head clinical geneticist at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney, the age at which a family member's cancer was diagnosed and the pathology of the cancer determines the risk of you carrying a familial gene fault. "If your mother was diagnosed over the age of 50 and no other family member has had breast or ovarian cancer, the chance of you carrying a faulty BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene is small, especially if other family members lived to an old age," she says.

However, if your mother has had two different episodes of breast cancer, your risk is slightly higher, as it is if one or more of your blood relatives have had either breast or ovarian cancer under the age of 40, Dr Tucker says. Jewish people are also classed as higher risk because they are more likely to carry a gene mutation.

If test results show a gene fault for either BRCA1 or BRCA2, a woman can opt for surgery such as a double mastectomy – which reduces the risk of breast cancer to less than five per cent according to Dr Tucker.

So-called prophylactic surgery also reduces the risk of ovarian cancer, although Dr Gard warns that ovarian cancer can still occur if the ovaries and tubes are removed.

"I advise that patients with a BRCA mutation have a 30 per cent risk of ovarian cancer prior to surgery," he says. After surgery, that drops to two per cent.

### Non-surgical options

When it comes to ovarian cancer, the most effective form of risk reduction for women with BRCA mutation is surgery to remove the ovaries and fallopian tubes – ideally before age 40.

This does, however, spell the end of plans to bear children. "Removing the ovaries will make a woman menopausal, which can increase her risk of heart disease and osteoporosis," warns Dr Gard. "It is essential for women to take hormone replacement therapy at least to the time of the average natural menopause (age 50) in order to minimise the risk of these complications."

For women who decide against surgery, the combined oral contraceptive pill can be administered with ovarian cancer risk reduction estimated at 50 per cent with prolonged use of five years or more.

Alternative preventative options include having regular mammograms or MRI scans to detect cancer early or taking the drug Tamoxifen, which has been used as a treatment for breast cancer for 30 years.

In the next 10 years, Dr Kirk predicts that science will enable us to get a genetic profile from a blood test that will predict our likelihood of developing certain cancers based on our genes. "It's a very exciting development because it will make it simpler to find genetic faults, and once we can do that, testing other family members is easy and we will be able to lead them to the appropriate health management," she says.

## Help at hand

If you think you are at high risk of breast and ovarian cancer and you want to find out more about genetic testing and the faulty BRCA gene, you should first see your GP. If you're looking for information and support from other women on a similar journey, take a look at [pinkhope.org.au](http://pinkhope.org.au). The Pink Hope charity was started by Australian Krystal Barter, who tested positive for a BRCA mutation after her great grandmother, grandmother and mother all got breast cancer at a young age. After having a double mastectomy at 25, Krystal began Pink Hope as a support for families to investigate their family history, evaluate their options and provide a place for high-risk women to share their stories.

To access a family cancer clinic closest to you, go to [genetics.edu.au/genetics-services](http://genetics.edu.au/genetics-services) ■



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# RELIEF EFFORT





**When it comes to being in control, wee's one of the things you take for granted. But issues with keeping it in are more common than you might think.**

Words: Evelyn Lewin

Once you're out of nappies, urinating gets filed under 'self-discipline'. Like food and washing your hair, it needs to kowtow to your schedule. The fact that wee isn't quite so black and white is conveniently lost in polite conversation.

In short, urine is a waste product sent by your kidneys to your bladder. It's a bit like putting the bins out. Once the kidneys have sent enough fluid south, your bladder feels full and you queue for the bathroom. While you're standing there pretending to care that a colleague had the driveway re-paved, a valve at the base of the bladder – the urinary sphincter – stops the fluid from escaping. When you're ready to go, it relaxes, letting the waste escape through a tube called the urethra.

Quite when you need to go to the ladies' depends on your bladder capacity, which is subject to all manner of factors including age and height and whether you've had kids.

"I would expect a young 30-year-old woman to be able to hold 500 to 600ml with relative ease. But if they get up to age 80, it's probably around the 300ml mark," says Dr Yik Lim, consultant urogynaecologist at Melbourne's Mercy Hospital for Women.

"A five-foot tall person would have a smaller bladder than a six-foot tall person."

### High frequency

If you get up to go to the bathroom every hour on the hour, it probably reflects how much you're drinking and whether you're hitting the caffeinated beverages. "If a person goes to the toilet 10

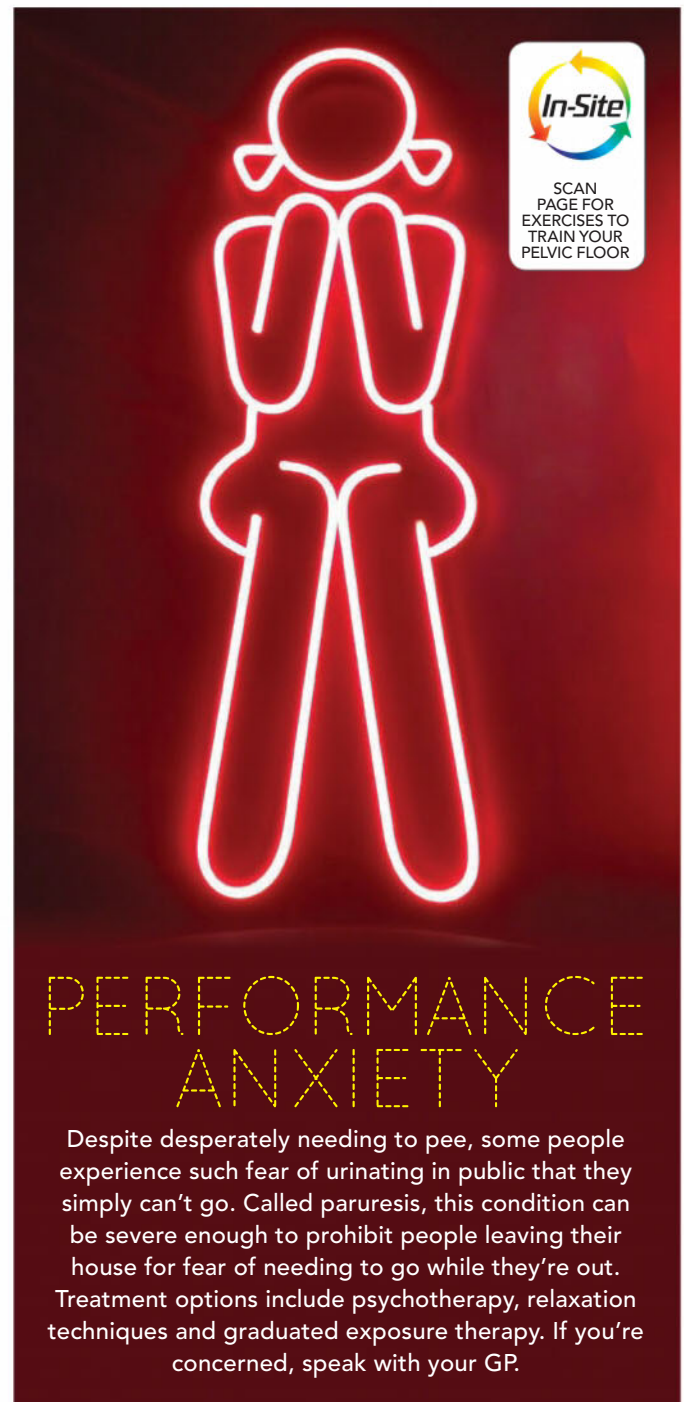
times a day but they drink five litres of fluid a day, then on average you're looking at 500 ml [per wee], which would be quite normal as far as I was concerned. Whereas if a person only drinks 500 ml of water a day and goes to the toilet 10 times a day, then you would be a bit more worried," says Dr Lim. Most people should hit the loo when they have between 200 ml and 400 ml in their bladder. You shouldn't need to pass urine more than eight times during the day and more than once overnight.

### All in the timing

Sure, you might be able to hold on long enough to try on the last Zara dress in your size, but prolonged holding on when you need to go can mess up your body's inbuilt regulation. Leaving urine in your bladder for ages makes you more likely to develop a urinary tract infection (UTI), says Dr Lim. "If a person is holding on to a litre in the bladder, you wouldn't want them to hold any longer," he says. Similarly, there are good reasons not to go to the bathroom every time you get the chance. Soon enough your body will adapt to needing to go when your bladder's only an eighth full, says Dr Lim. In effect, it's a bit like training your metabolism to gain weight on diet rations. "What I tell my patients is if you don't stretch the bladder up over time, it may not hold as much [urine] as you'd like," explains Dr Lim.

### Leak technique

Yes, there is an optimal position (who knew?). "Research has shown that when you hover and not sit on the toilet seat, you may retain up to 30 per cent of the bladder volume inside,"



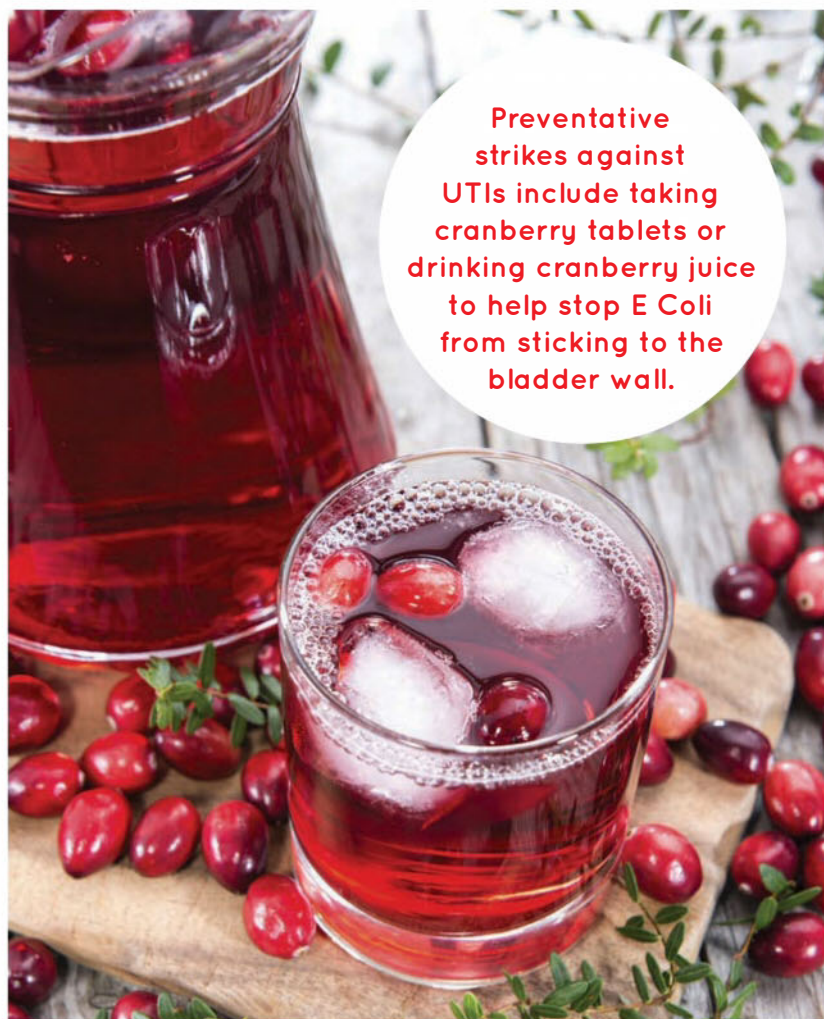
**PERFORMANCE ANXIETY**

Despite desperately needing to pee, some people experience such fear of urinating in public that they simply can't go. Called paruresis, this condition can be severe enough to prohibit people leaving their house for fear of needing to go while they're out. Treatment options include psychotherapy, relaxation techniques and graduated exposure therapy. If you're concerned, speak with your GP.

Dr Lim says. This is because you need to relax your pelvic muscles in order to empty your bladder properly, and hovering over a seat stops you from fully relaxing.

First, says Dr Lim, have your feet flat on the floor, your bottom on the toilet seat and your body leaning slightly forward. It's important not to hover over the seat either – even if you're at a

public toilet. There is very little risk of disease transmission from public lavatories, Dr Lim says. "People need to understand that they're very unlikely to catch a sexually transmitted infection [STI] from a public toilet... The reality is the bacteria is unlikely to survive very long on the ceramic toilet seat." If you're worried, Dr Lim advises covering the seat with toilet paper.



**Preventative strikes against UTIs include taking cranberry tablets or drinking cranberry juice to help stop E Coli from sticking to the bladder wall.**

### Bladder blowout

UTIs are surprisingly common. An estimated one in two women will experience one in their lifetime according to Better Health Channel.

The reason women are so much more prone to these infections than men is because the tube that leads to the bladder (the urethra) is really short in females – being only about four cm long. Consequently, bugs from the outside don't have far to travel to reach the bladder.

If it burns when you pass urine, you have blood in your wee, you feel like you need to go all the time (even if you've just been) or are frequently passing only small amounts of fluid, you may have a urinary tract infection. Left unchecked, UTIs can travel up to the kidneys, causing more severe infections

called pyelonephritis. Preventative strikes against UTIs include taking cranberry tablets or drinking cranberry juice to help stop E.coli from sticking to the bladder wall. Wiping from front to back after weeing is ideal to avoid introducing germs to the urethra. Bacteria can also be introduced during sex, says Dr Lim. Weeing after sex can "flush out" these bugs. For overall bladder health, Dr Lim says healthy fluid intake is key. "The important thing is to have a healthy daily fluid intake," says Dr Lim. He says this is best achieved by drinking 1.5 to 2 litres of water a day. Limiting caffeinated drinks including coffee, cola and caffeinated teas also favours bladder health. Drinking three or four cups of coffee a day can irritate the bladder and have a diuretic effect.

## Escape Clause

As we age – especially once we've had kids – our pelvic floor muscles lose elasticity and become overstretched, which can welcome incontinence. Far from sounding the death knell for plyometric workouts and laughing at office jokes, the conditions that favour accidents can be reversed. "You can definitely change... the suppleness of your pelvic floor muscles by doing pelvic floor exercises," says physiotherapist Lana Johnson from Sydney's BPS. DIY exercises can retrain the body parts that regulate urination.

"Imagine you have a guide-wire from your pubic bone to your tailbone and you're trying to tighten that guide-wire," Johnson says. Then maintain a "gentle 30 per cent contraction" while breathing normally. Doing this for five minutes a day indicates a solid contraction. If you're not sure whether you're using the right muscles, a physiotherapist can perform a non-invasive real-time ultrasound to check.

## FLUORO FLOW



**If your pee looks like a raver's glow stick, it may be due to multivitamins, which turn "nice clear yellowish" wee fluoro due to excess B vitamin riboflavin. It's a good sign that your body's expelling what it doesn't need. On the flipside, dark yellow or deep orange wee can signal dehydration. ■**

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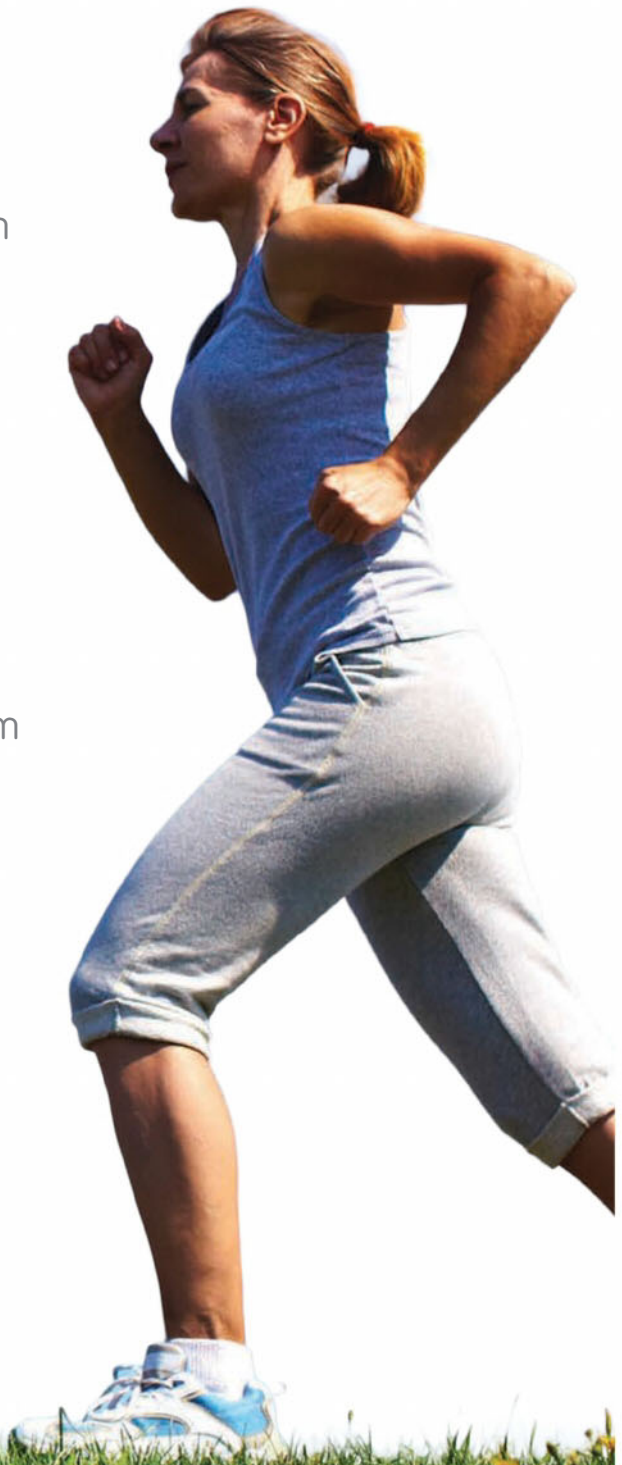
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# THE GIRLS ONLY ♀ MARKETPLACE

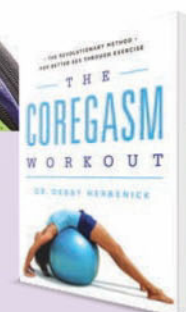
Let's get this straight: feminine hygiene isn't gross. Our lady parts (and all that comes with them) are nothing to be irked by. What's more, they're worth taking good care of (they're kind of important). Although talking tampons and Kegel exercises might make you blush, the health of your (insert innuendo here) should make it onto your list of personal health priorities. We scoured the interwebs for nifty things to help you do just that:

## KGOAL

Seventy per cent of women will experience incidents of poor bladder control, and in most cases this can be managed by effective pelvic floor exercises. The problem is...let's face it...we don't like doing them. kGoal is an intelligent, interactive training system for female pelvic floor exercises, offering two integrated exercise programmes: a vibrating biofeedback option and 180-day tracking. The device has a unique 360-degree sensing technology and is made from soft medical-grade silicone to comfortably fit different body types. For more information visit [www.kgoal.com.au](http://www.kgoal.com.au), RRP \$188.00

## PERICOACH

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# BOTTOMS UP

Squats and dumbbell flies failed? The latest butt and boob procedures are designed to evade detection, but altering your body is still a major decision. Before you consider a nip or tuck, here's some background reading.

Once upon a time, when Pamela Anderson was the poster girl for cosmetic augmentation, the world of nips and tucks was confined to people with not enough sense and too much coin. The science of altering bodies was as crude as the cat's eyes and pneumatic F cups. Fast forward a decade or two and cosmetic physicians have got body tweaks down to a barely discernible fine art. Now patients pay mega-bucks for practitioners who pride themselves on subtlety; the mark of a good butt, boob or face job is that no-one thinks you've had one.

## *The Procedure*

## BRAZILIAN BUTT LIFT

### Say what?

Fat transfers – using your own body fat to enhance other areas of the body – are becoming more common as a means of body and facial sculpting, says Dr Gavin Chan from the Victorian Cosmetic Institute. It is best for people who wish to reduce fat deposits from areas of the body resistant to diet and exercise.

### How does a butt lift differ from breast implants?

The procedures couldn't be more different. While a breast implant is just that – introducing a foreign object to enlarge the breast – a butt lift uses your own fat stores to sculpt the desired shape.

### So it's a new spin on liposuction?



The staged process does involve liposuction, which is used to remove fat from stubborn areas such as the arms, bra area, hips, outer thighs, inner thighs and abdomen, waist or back. This fat is then re-injected into areas like the buttocks to make them shapelier, Dr Chan says. The procedure is also being applied to faces for so-called fat transfer facelifts.

### **Can you order a butt like you would, say, a wedding dress?**

"People often come in with an idea that they want a sizeable butt, but it's my job to educate them on what will achieve the best outcome," Dr Chan says. While he concedes that celeb derrieres sculpt butt-shape trends, he warns against basing cosmetic decisions on fashion. Dr Chan favours personalised recommendations based on the fat a patient has and what they want to achieve. "The goal is to make it look natural and in proportion so it becomes a nice feature," Dr Chan says. "The goal is not just to give people a big butt, but to get them into ideal proportions. Fundamentally, that's an hourglass shape; that hasn't changed," Dr Chan says. "People often choose bits that aren't so important; they might ask for a butt lift but the big issue might really be their hips." Fat can be taken from the thighs, abdomen or hips.

### **What can I expect?**

After your health history and current medical status have been cleared, liposuction is done as day surgery under a general anaesthetic or heavy sedation or while you're awake (the incision is about the size of the diameter of a little finger). Candidates can return to work within a week and drive in one to two days, although sitting isn't ideal for a few weeks post procedure. Compression garments are worn for about three weeks after surgery.

### **Is it permanent?**

"If you gain weight it will only be a bigger size version of the new shape," Dr Chan says. Once the fat cell population of an area has been reduced, it can't re-populate. If you do gain weight, the fat cells you do have left will stretch. "If someone does gain weight, it re-distributes more evenly."

### **How much does it cost?**

The price depends on the number of areas from which you have fat removed, but expect to pay between \$8,000 and \$13,000 – about the same as the cost of breast augmentation (\$9,000 to \$13,000) or a tummy tuck (\$10,000).

## *The Procedure*

# BREAST AUGMENTATION



### **Say what?**

Forget pictures of porn stars. A woman's breasts form some of the most important and attractive aesthetic lines of her body, which is why breast augmentation is still one of the most frequently performed cosmetic procedures, Dr Chan says.

### **Where are breasts in the body-part trend cycle?**

"Today we celebrate the hourglass figure like we did back in the 1950s and 1960s more than we did a decade ago," Dr Chan says, crediting television shows such as *Mad Men* and curvy stars like Beyonce for a breast and buttock comeback.

### **Who's the ideal augmentation candidate?**

Typical patients include young women who feel they don't have big enough breasts or have asymmetrical breasts and women who have had children and are encountering sagging and shrinkage, says Me Clinic cosmetic surgeon Dr Ashley Granot.

### **Are implants permanent?**

Not necessarily – they may need maintenance. According to Dr Granot, most women with implants can cruise through 15 or 20 years with no issues; if there's no overt problem, they can be left in place. However, the bigger the implant, the higher the odds of complications. "If you started as an A cup and want to move up to a double F, it would be quite tight on the chest and it is more likely you will have compactions," Dr Granot says.

### **Can you breastfeed after a boob job?**

One of two main types of implant inflicts no encumbrance to breastfeeding. "The implant is put under the breast tissue, so not being able to breastfeed isn't a factor at all," says Dr Granot. However, a problem can occur when the breasts swell with breast milk. "The skin has to stretch to accommodate

the implant as well as the breast that's increasing in size with breast milk. Stretch marks and general stretching of the skin is more common in these women." The Australian Breastfeeding Association says there may be problems with milk supply, but these are generally able to be overcome and won't be able to be determined for certain until the time comes.

### **How are candidates assessed for suitability?**

A surgeon will need to do a physical examination and consider various lifestyle factors, Dr Granot says.

### **Are all implants created equal?**

In short, no, and each type has its pros and cons. In Australia, there are two main types of implant procedure – placed over the muscle and under. "If you put the implant over the muscle, you need something to cover it up, or you will see the edges and it will be very noticeable," Dr Granot says. On the not-so-great side, they can tend to look obviously false. On the flipside, under-muscle implants tend to look more natural but can be problematic for fitness fiends. "With athletic women, especially those who do a lot of push-ups, there is a tendency over a period of time for an under-the-muscle implant to be pushed downward and outward because the muscle doesn't cover the implant completely. For these women we would go above the muscle providing there's enough skin," Dr Granot says. The silicone implant scandals of the 80s and 90s have paved the way for superior-grade silicone immune to rupturing. "You can take your implant and cut right through it and the gel won't run, this is particularly reassuring for those worried about the wall of the implant bursting," says Dr Granot.

### **How much does it cost?**

Expect to pay about \$9,000 to \$13,000. ■

# CRINGE Benefit

If confronting your body's idiosyncrasies makes you want to wrap yourself in a very large blanket, these answers to common bio blights might help.

**W**hat's up with those dimples on your thighs, spots on your back and the fuzz on your tummy? News flash: they're totally normal. Yet it's also totally normal to feel a tad squeamish at the thought of baring them. We consulted doctors, dermatologists and beauty therapists on the best ways to tackle them – both in the clinic and at home.

## AREA: Stray Hairs

**THE PROBLEM:** Stray hairs on your upper lip, back or chest are linked to hormonal imbalances and an overabundance of testosterone in your system. If you notice thicker hair or more hair than usual, it's best you consult a specialist to see if it's hormones, or something more serious.

**SALON TREATMENT:** Tired of waxing and shaving? Consider more permanent removal methods such as laser. This involves a pigment-specific laser zoning in on the hair follicle to destroy it. Results can last from several months to several years depending on how many sessions you undergo. Make sure you

avoid the sun post-treatment to lower the risk of hyperpigmentation.



**HOME TREATMENT:** For sporadic hairs, try Veet EasyGrip™ Ready to Use Wax Strips, \$11.50, [veet.com.au](http://veet.com.au), which are easy to use and kind on your skin. For last minute de-fuzzing, go for a cream such as Nair Sensitive Hair Removal Cream,

\$6.20, [nair.com.au](http://nair.com.au). You can lower testosterone levels by changing your diet. Certain foods such as tuna, tomatoes and honey work to boost testosterone, while soy products, flax seeds and liquorice can help balance it out again.



## AREA: Bacne

**THE PROBLEM:** Though you can power through a breakout on your face with a spot treatment and some concealer, the same can't be said for bacne. Bacne is acne on your back – though it can also occur on your chest, shoulders and other parts of the body. The condition is exacerbated by oily body lotions, fragranced body wash and drying bar soaps. And its location means it's difficult for you to see and treat!

**SALON TREATMENT:** Approach bacne as you'd approach acne on your face – with a facial administered by a professional skincare therapist! The deep cleansing

treatment for your back usually includes a long steam, extractions and a clay mask to draw out impurities. Having a regular steam session may also help as long as you shower that sweat off at the end.

**HOME TREATMENT:** "Do you sweat a lot? Do you exercise a lot and sweat on your back? Do you exfoliate? Work out why you get bacne so you can prevent more from happening," says Jacqui Arnold, head beauty therapist at Esstudio Galleria. At-home bacne-beating methods include having regular showers morning and night, changing your towel at least three times a week, avoiding synthetic fibres, and swapping your usual soap

for a non-irritating, anti-bacterial cleansing bar, such as Dermalogica Clean Bar, \$31, [dermalogica.com.au](http://dermalogica.com.au). A gel cleanser such as Swisse Olive Leaf Gel Cleanser, \$10.95, [swisse.com](http://swisse.com) with glycolic and salicylic acid is a great option to help naturally exfoliate skin while reducing blemishes. Emma Hobson, education manager at the International Dermal Institute and Dermalogica, also says to avoid sunscreens with mineral oils and to make sure your skin products are non-comedogenic.



PHOTOGRAPHY: THINKSTOCK





## AREA: Veins

**THE PROBLEM:** Don't want to leave the house without stockings due to unsightly varicose veins? You're not the only one. They affect one in three people at some state of their lives. Though largely genetic, caused by a valve in the vein weakening and enlarging, Arnold also warns against "standing or sitting for long periods of time, being immobile for a long time and lack of exercise."

**SALON TREATMENT:** Try endovenous laser ablation therapy. The relatively painless 45-minute procedure heats and damages the vein, making it collapse and essentially disintegrate over the next few months. Pain is minimised by the use of a cooling device on the treated area. A local anesthetic may also be used if you wish.

**HOME TREATMENT:** Cover up visible veins with a professional strength-concealer such as **Napoleon Pro Palette Concealer Correct and Conceal**, \$60, [napoleonperdis.com](http://napoleonperdis.com) or a tanning product such as **Bondi Sands Self Tanning Foam** \$19.95, [bondisands.com.au](http://bondisands.com.au). You can help prevent their formation in the first place by eating more foods that contain bioflavonoids (vitamins E and C), which work to strengthen the vein walls.



## AREA: Cellulite

**THE PROBLEM:** Are you confronted with lumpy cellulite whenever you look in the mirror? Almost all women are! Approximately 95 per cent of us experience those pesky dimples on some part of our bodies – from our busts and arms to our hips, thighs and butts. Cellulite tends to form in areas with the least circulation and without activity is very hard to budge. These treatments, however, are proven to smooth and firm.

**SALON TREATMENT:** Candela GentleYAG Laser. The non-ablative treatment can be used on your arms, abdomen and legs to rid them of cellulite. The laser triggers the body's natural wound response, encouraging a contraction of the skin through the healing process. As you lie there, you'll have a laser beam of high-intensity light deeply penetrate skin tissue. The laser heats the collagen, causing

it to thicken and tighten. They usually recommend four to six treatments spaced two to four weeks apart.

**HOME TREATMENT:** Body brushing is said to combat cellulite through stimulating lymph flow and circulation. A large, soft natural-bristle brush, such as **Endota Round Brush** \$45, [endotadayspa.com.au](http://endotadayspa.com.au), is used to stroke the surface of the skin and legs in the direction of the nearest lymph node (back of knees, groin, heart). Start at your feet and sweep the brush up the legs in long, light, brisk movements. Finish with **Pevonia Smooth & Tone Body Svelt Gel**, \$137.50, [pevonia.com.au](http://pevonia.com.au), with green coffee and seaweed to boost circulation and reduce fluid retention.



## AREA: Stretch Marks

**THE PROBLEM:** Stretch marks are caused by rapid weight loss and gain, occurring when the collagen fibres in the skin's dermal layer tear. There's a strong hereditary influence, too, and 80 per cent of women will experience them in their lifetime.

**SALON TREATMENT:** Try dermal skin needling. The 20-minute cosmetic procedure involves going over the skin with a roller of fine needles to induce collagen growth in problem areas, improving skin texture and reducing the visibility of scars and wrinkles. The needles puncture and injure the skin to begin a process of healing followed by the production of collagen, and results last for up to 12 months.

**HOME TREATMENT:** "There is no miracle cream to remove stretch marks; however, daily application of topical nutrients such as vitamin C, peptides to support connective tissue integrity, essential lipids and vitamin A can all assist with a healthier skin," says Fiona Tuck from Skinitut. **Mesoesthetic Striashock, \$159, advancedcosmeceuticals.com.au** maintains hydration levels while aiding dermal repair with its active ingredients. Wearing sun protection will also help prevent stretch marks becoming darker.



## AREA: Acne Scars

**THE PROBLEM:** As though acne wasn't confidence-sucking enough, now you're left with dark marks and scars in its wake. "Acne scarring develops when recurrent inflammation from deeper cystic lesions damages the collagen in your skin," explains dermatologist Dr Julia Tzu. "Normal healthy tissue is then replaced by thinned-out scar tissue, which can manifest itself as depressions along the contour of the skin." These scars can hang around for months, or years, before fading.

**SALON TREATMENT:** Kim Kardashian and Courtney Cox are fans of Fraxel laser resurfacing. A type of laser therapy, it uses fractionated lasers to penetrate deep into layers of skin. As the body goes through its natural healing process, it works to rid itself of excess pigmentation and abnormal cells while stimulating collagen production. The treatment itself takes between 20 minutes to an hour, with greater

intensity lasers used to target acne scarring. Depending on your skin's needs, you may require multiple treatments.

**HOME TREATMENT:** Naturally sourced treatment oils such **Trilogy Rosehip Oil, \$21.95, trilogyproducts.com**, packed with potent antioxidant ingredients include lycopene from tomatoes, phytosterol from acai berries and essential fatty acids (omegas 3 and 6) from cranberry seed, help to fade acne scars over time. For a faster result, **SkinMedica Scar Recovery Gel, \$52.80, advancedskintechology.com.au** is very effective. The key ingredient is Centelline, which is clinically proven to fade scars post-surgery.



## AREA: Ingrown Hairs

**THE PROBLEM:** Do you suffer from those pesky bikini-line bumps? End up with a bumpy red rash after shaving? Ingrown hairs occur when dead skin cells clog the follicle, trapping the hair and forcing it to grow under rather than over the dermis. The results are painful, inflamed and unsightly, especially come swimsuit season! As Kate Morris, founder of Adore Beauty, says, "I'd say pretty much anyone who waxes will have issues with ingrown hairs at some point."

**SALON TREATMENT:** Got a particularly painful ingrown? If infected, your dermatologist may recommend removing the hair with a sterile needle before covering it with a topical antibiotic. This also works to release any sebum or pus trapped in the follicle. Alternatively, he or she may prescribe a topical steroid cream to apply to the area.

**HOME TREATMENT:** Cleanse and exfoliate regularly to clear away any dead skin cells. We recommend **Indeed Labs' Powdered Exfoliator, \$35, indeedlabs.com**, an enzyme micro-powder that activates in water to remove dead skin cells through chemical exfoliation. You can also use **Bliss Ingrown Eliminating Pads, \$39.95, blissworld.com** in between waxing and shaving sessions. The wipes contain alpha and beta hydroxy acids and are soaked in antioxidant-rich green tea and soothing oat extract to get to the root of the issue. ■







YOUR BEST  
MOVE IT

# SHAPE SHIFT

When it comes to body shape, some parts are more malleable than others. To avoid wasting workout time on nature's fixed states and free up grunt to change what you can, clue up on your body's inbuilt settings.

Words: Madeline Lakos

**S**o you're a pear that wants to be more of a banana? Or, in fruit-unrelated body-type speak, less hippy and more all-over slender? With informed diet and exercise, this type of transformation might well be possible, but admonitions do apply. Your ability to achieve a shape-shift is almost entirely dependent on genetic predispositions such as bone structure and placement of body fat – as well as your meal plan and your workouts. Although it's easy to place yourself in a body shape category, in reality it's not so black and white. If you're comparing your body to someone else's in the interest of getting into 'shape', it's a bit like comparing...well...apples and oranges. So before you send yourself on the transformation version of a wild goose chase, it might be worth taking a step back to acknowledge the things you can and cannot alter about your physique.

## STORAGE SOLUTIONS: WHERE IS YOUR FAT?

with Dr Amira Sanki

### WOMEN:

"We tend to store fat under our skin, commonly in the lower part of our tummies and upper thighs, making us hippy. Many frustrated women will see me about their hip and lower tummy bulges as they have worked hard to be at their ideal weight and BMI but they just can't get rid of that fat. A lot of my patients come in and say, 'I cannot lose weight from my thighs' or 'I cannot lose weight from my breasts'. Surgery in these patients makes sense."

### MEN:

"The apple shape is a male pattern of weight gain. Women usually gain weight in their hips and tummy, giving them a pear shape. A lot of men won't carry their fat under their skin, but internally around their organs. This is another reason for their centripetal pattern of weight gain. You can only reduce internal or visceral fat with diet and exercise...you can't get to that with liposuction."



## THE CAN'T CHANGE BITS:

### GENETICS

Regardless of your set shape, losing weight and gaining muscle is undoubtedly going to have aesthetic manifestations. But will it promise a body free from bits you're not quite happy with? There are no guarantees. In its typical senseless fashion, the Internet has provided women with a myriad of beauty-shape-traits one usually has to be blessed with to flaunt. The much sought after 'thigh gap' or the protrusion of hipbones (named the 'bikini bridge' by some poor mislead soul), even the coveted Kardashian bum, have been added to the list of desirable superficial characteristics. Can everyone achieve a round, perky, plus-size booty by squatting until they can't feel their glutes? Contrary to numerous gym memes: not usually, no. "You're either born with a booty, or you're not," says plastic surgeon Dr Amira Sanki ([silkwoodmedical.com.au](http://silkwoodmedical.com.au)). Although it may be hard to accept you'll never rock a miniskirt quite like Kimmy K, the realistic expectation of what all those hours on the Smith machine will achieve is fuller, firmer glutes in the shape that you were blessed with. "There are different bum shapes, there are rhomboid shapes, square shapes, rectangle shapes...and the shape that everyone wants is essentially the Kim Kardashian shape: the really rounded bottom that's quite full and perky, but that's genetic too."

As you can imagine, Dr Sanki has some experience in drawing the line when it comes to people's aesthetic preferences. Thanks to fat grafting (aka the Brazilian butt lift), backsides aren't usually one of them; however, when it comes to other aspects of shape she's well practised. "Diet, exercise, fat loss, shape, it's something that I often have to talk to people and educate them about," says Dr Sanki. "I've had patients that sometimes don't realise they can't dramatically alter their body shape; I have a pinch of their skin and have a feel of where their bones and muscles are and take their photos and I show them

that even if we were to remove as much fat as possible, they're still going to be blessed with a certain body shape, and some people don't appreciate that until you show them."

### 'PROBLEM AREAS'

According to Dr Sanki, a problem area tends to be a specific bulge that's largely not consistent with the rest of the person's body shape, makes it difficult to fit into clothing well and/or is uncomfortable with movement. "The classic problem areas for women are usually the thigh area and the upper arms and the tummy... these can be the areas that are least affected by diet and exercise too," she says.

Extreme diet and exercise practices or weight loss in excess shouldn't be thought of as a solution to 'problem areas', so this is where cosmetic surgery becomes practical: "You can work the muscles in a specific area to make them bigger, but you can't lose fat specifically from one area – fat loss happens evenly across the entire body," she says. "I think that someone who has a 'problem area' is a plastic surgery patient, but someone who needs to lose weight overall is a diet and exercise person...diet and exercise is much safer than total body liposuction."

Exercise scientist Johann Ruys ([atleta.com.au](http://atleta.com.au)) says that problem areas are also acknowledged by trainers. "We have to change a lot of things to try and 'remove' these problem areas – like lifestyle, diet and exercise specificity – because they can be caused through a combination of stress, poor diet, lack of sleep, even when coupled with regular exercise.

"This doesn't always work – often we can decrease the problem, but in some cases it's very hard." Like you cannot 'spot reduce' with weight loss, you also can't 'spot build' with exercise. "Even if you were to work out one side only, for example, 50 to 60 per cent of the increase made on the worked side would translate to the other side, despite not being worked."

## SHIFTING SOMATOTYPES

Aside from your bone structure, your physique is also dependent on your body type.

Descriptions that base body shapes on their likeness to fruit stem from more extreme expressions of the three key body types: ectomorphs, endomorphs and mesomorphs. These are called 'somatotypes' and they're based around a theory developed in the 1950s. People were classified on a scale from one to seven based on their adherence to each somatotype, meaning that there are acknowledged variations in these classifications. "Often we are a mixture of somatotypes," says Ruys. "For example, an endo-mesomorph would be genetically shorter in stature with a moderate body-fat percentage but still quite muscular and with the ability to lower their body-fat percentage substantially."

### ECTOMORPH

**YOUR SHAPE:** BANANA/LONG AND LEAN

Ectomorphs are that friend we all have that eats whatever she wants and never seems to gain a gram. Ectomorph body types tend to have a lower body-fat percentage but they will usually find it hard to lay down muscle and keep it too. If you're craving bigger curves and visible muscle tone, this might be you.

### ENDOMORPH

**YOUR SHAPE:** APPLE/ROUND AND SOLID

Some might say it's tough being an endomorph. This body type tends towards a higher percentage of body-fat and a shorter stature. This sometimes comes with a challenged metabolism, which means it's harder to shift the kay-gees too. Many endomorphs are solidly built and their ability to lay down muscle easily helps that cause. The perks? Faster training adaptations.

### MESOMORPH

**YOUR SHAPE:** PEAR/ HOURGLASS AND ATHLETIC

A high muscle-to-fat ratio puts mesomorphs in the spotlight when it comes to idealised body types. They tend to have a naturally 'fit' physique and find it easy to both gain muscle and lose weight. They often experience rapid adaptations in the gym, which can result in a little too much time spent in the comfort zone instead of training harder (there's a rumour that mesomorphs also tend to gain weight easily too.)



## MAKE THE CHANGE

Body type, genetics and perceived problem areas aside, what can you change with diet and exercise? Realistically, there are only two things: you can tone/grow your muscles and decrease your body-fat percentage. How easy or hard this is depends on your somatotype. "Muscle tone, fat-free mass and body-fat percentage are all alterable with respect to our somatotype and daily energy balance," says Ruys. "These all play a part in weight loss and the resultant shape of our physique."

### IF YOU WANT A SLIMMER FIGURE:

A slender body is a coveted trait, but not one everyone can or should seek. A 2011 study of Hong Kong university students found that many underweight women (30.9 per cent) and 75.5 per cent of normal weight women desired a thinner, lighter body. Discrepancies between actual and ideal body shapes are frequently linked to poor health, depression and eating disorders, so assessing whether weight loss is an ideal goal for you or not (based on your emotional and physical reasons) is ideal before embarking on shape-changing weight loss.

If your decision has been made: knowing how much body fat you'll need to lose to develop a certain shape is often difficult to determine, but a decrease in

body-fat percentage doesn't have to be significant to show. "Generally, you would be able to see a one or two per cent body fat decrease yourself; however, friends and family might only notice a three or four per cent change on you, sometimes more." That is around a 1.3 or 2.6 kilogram weight loss (respectively, and assuming all weight lost was fat) in a 65-kilogram person.

Endomorphs, in particular, will need to work hard to obtain a slimmer figure, and ectomorphs, not so much. "Ectomorphs may well lose weight faster and more easily in response to hard cardio, as they are more naturally a 'leaner' body shape than endomorphs," says Ruys. But regardless of your body type, the method remains the same. "For weight loss your number-one stop should be limited diet and cardio, specifically cardio at higher intensities." Studies have shown that high-intensity training elicits a higher post-exercise oxygen consumption (EPOC), which means you keep burning kilojoules even after you've stopped. Mesomorphs, as is to be expected, will find weight loss fairly simple. "Mesomorphs have a pretty happy medium and are quite commonly very easy to sculpt and tone," says Ruys.

### IF YOU WANT INCREASED MUSCLE TONE:

Increasing your muscle tone and mass is your best bet when it comes to noticeable shape shifting. According to Ruys,

If you're not happy with your diagnosis, the good news is that your somatotype can somewhat change in response to diet and exercise, albeit only a little. "You're not going to get taller or shorter or see an increase in bone mass from regular training; however, a loss of weight, an increase in tone and an increase in muscle mass can mildly change your somatotype." For the endomorphs out there, muscle mass has an effect both on your appearance and your metabolism, and by that we mean it increases your resting metabolic rate so you burn more energy at rest. This can have positive implications for your ability to lose weight and keep it off.

And speaking of keeping it off, your set point weight (i.e. the weight your body comfortably sits at for extended periods of time) is also totally negotiable. "You require at least six months at a certain weight before our brain, or more specifically your central executive mechanism, realises this weight as our new 'set point' or natural weight." Set point weight is based on the brain making it easier for the body to maintain a homeostatic composition, but not if it's unhealthy. "It's a method designed for survival, first and foremost, so if you try to drop it down to a weight that it's not comfortable sustaining, it will try and find more ways to store more body fat, which is a protective factor." This also means that slower weight change, rather than rapid or extreme weight loss, is ideal for achieving a new set point weight.



"Increased muscle tone basically means that your muscles are physically tighter when at a state of rest, which results in better muscle definition by making them appear firmer, tighter and more prominent." This is done through consistent weights training and generally needs to go hand in hand with weight loss if you want visible perk.

Despite their challenges on the slimming front, endomorphs have the advantage when it comes to muscle, and ectomorphs (sometimes labelled 'hardgainers' in this sphere) are not going to find it so easy: "More hard work for muscle mass, or hypertrophy, would be required by ectomorphs," says Ruys. "Weights training will generally elicit a greater muscle mass gain in mesomorphs and endomorphs, just because their frame is designed to accommodate more muscle or weight"

## TRUE TRANSFORMATIONS

Unfortunately there's no fitness crystal ball that allows you to determine exactly how these adjustments will show...but we do have two taut, toned and (believe it or not) totally transformed fitness models who are not afraid to tell it as it is: Theresa Jenn Lopetrone and Rita Catolino. Lopetrone said she grew up eating rich Italian food without moderation and largely shunned exercise until her university years, and Catolino told us she was fighting a family trend of obesity and decided to make some major lifestyle changes after the birth of her daughter. Both had qualms with their previous body shapes, and both ended up pretty stoked with their results.

## THERESA JENN LOPETRONE

[theresajennlopetrone.org](http://theresajennlopetrone.org)

**HEIGHT:** 162.6 cm  
**SOMATOTYPE:**  
Mesomorph

**B**efore transformation: "Prior to my transformation, I would describe my body shape as thick and bottom heavy. I carry most of my weight on my hips, thighs and butt."

**Desired shape shift:** "I wanted leaner legs; defined, muscular arms; a flat stomach with abs, and more body symmetry."

**After transformation:** "After my transformation, I would describe my body shape as stronger and leaner."

**On weight loss:** "When I was at my highest weight, around 80 kilos, it took 10 kilograms [of weight loss] to begin to change the shape of my body. But when I dropped down to around 64 kilos, it was more about body fat percentage than weight loss. I lost another two or three kilos but my friends and family were convinced I had lost 10 because of how much my body shape changed."

**On muscle tone:** "The more muscle mass I have obtained, the leaner I look. Some women believe that cardio only will result in changing their body shape, but in fact, cardio will essentially make you a smaller version of yourself...if you are not content with your current body shape and want more curves, less cellulite, a leaner physique, or stronger muscles, for example, then lifting weights can help you achieve this."

**On butt:** "I always had a bubble butt growing up. This wasn't something I thought about during my transformation because it was something I always tried to hide with clothing and make smaller through diet and exercise. Creating a muscular lower body made me appreciate the hard work and dedication that goes into creating a perky butt."

**On problem areas:** "I think problem areas can be changed with diet and fitness; however, it will take much longer to accomplish than other body areas...they are usually the most stubborn and the last to go."



# RITA CATOLINO

ritacatolino.com

**HEIGHT:** 170cm  
**SOMATOTYPE:**  
Mesomorph

**Before transformation:** “I would say my body shape was unfit, jiggle and flabby. I had a ‘flat’ posterior chain, legs with no definition, skinny arms and a bloated belly.”

**Desired shape shift:** “I wanted to change lots of things, but my transformation was a long one... It’s been eight years and I worked on the inside and the outside for a long time.”

**After transformation:** “I would describe my post-transformation body as strong, fit and athletic. I look at the whole picture – my emotions, thoughts, balance, self-love – so although I still have some cellulite, my shoulders could always be rounder and I am continually pushing, I am happy with my transformation.”

**On weight loss:** “Weight loss helped, but what really changed the shape and sculpted my body was the incorporation of resistance training.”

**On muscle tone:** “Muscle tone changed my shape a lot. It was the key to higher glutes, tighter legs, defined arms.”

**On butt:** “It’s definitely something I considered in my training. I like the look of a rounder backside, it fills clothing out and on a training note, the gluteus is one of the biggest muscle groups! Training often and heavy as well as making sure you eat enough to support that muscle group is key!”

**On problem areas:** “I think women need to stop looking at themselves as individual body parts. But I think we can change most things with proper diet and exercise.”



## HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR CHANGE

Although your set point weight might adjust automatically to changes in body weight, your body composition (or your new somatotype) requires maintenance.

“Sculpting is not a one-time event, it requires continual work,” says Ruys. “You can’t start a change then stop because you’ve reached your result and expect to continue looking like that.”

At the same time, it’s not about training your hardest and being on a diet all year round. We asked our two figure models what they thought about realistic and sustainable shape shifts:



### THERESA JENN LOPETRONE

**ON REALISTIC SHAPE-SHIFTING:** “I think it’s realistic to become a healthier and fitter version of yourself, but it has to be done slowly and in alignment with what is realistic and manageable for you...maintaining an extremely low body-fat percentage all year round, consuming low calories and excessively working out is not healthy for the body or the mind, and I believe this is an unrealistic change to pursue.”

**ON MAINTENANCE:** “I’m mindful of what I eat and I get my sweat on around five days a week for an hour each time. I change my fitness routine every four weeks and I focus on eating healthy meals Monday through Friday and on the weekend I will usually enjoy a glass of red wine and dinner and dessert out. Measuring my food daily is important because of modelling opportunities that come up. Being healthy and fit (not shredded) all year long makes it easier to prepare for photo shoots, plus I feel my best when I take care of myself.”



### RITA CATOLINO

**ON REALISTIC SHAPE-SHIFTING:** “Be aware that the journey will never be what you set out for, and the results will vary – but you will learn so much about yourself on the way, and you will be a better version of yourself too!”

**ON MAINTENANCE:** “More than maintenance, I would say I continually strive for more – with training daily, meditation and finding a balance between eating my *BeautyFuel* way, as well as incorporating balance – aka wine and chocolate.” ■

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# PROGRESS



# PROTOCOL

## Express Results Edition

Not seeing results as fast as you'd like or in a fitness holding pattern? These tricked-up workout protocols will speed you past mediocrity to optimal physique in no time.

Words: Madeline Lakos



**S**o you got through winter. Congrats. If you've entered spring minus your fitness regimen (or with the same routine you had back in July), getting back to peak fitness demands drastic measures. "Without progression, overload and variety, your body becomes very efficient in the moves it's done over and over again; in fact, it is so good at it that it could do it as if on autopilot," says exercise physiologist, clinical personal trainer and author Jodie Hopkins ([yourlifeyourbody.com.au](http://yourlifeyourbody.com.au)). "To become more efficient the body will conserve energy by using less muscle fibres, improved energy pathways and have less excessive movement; this also means that you might feel like you're working out just as hard but your body has worked out a much easier way for you to do it and therefore less work is done."

In other words: without variety and change, your bod stays the same. But drastic measures don't mean working out twice a day or booking two-hour sessions every day until summer. Instead, we've mined the exer phys textbooks for expedient ways to stimulate muscle growth and other markers of progress.

Your first option is to up the intensity, frequency and/or duration of your current fitness schedule. Or, if the idea of spending a minute longer in your current routine is about to bore you back into hibernation, perhaps it's time to trial some new techniques. There is a host of fitness phenomena out there that are designed to bring on game-changing results, with only a little extra effort.

## = SUSPENSION TRAINING

Have you seen those things that look like seatbelts with handles dangling in your gym recently? Chances are they're suspension-training straps, commonly branded as TRX. The US Navy, who required equipment that allowed SEALs to train with minimal space, seeded the idea. But now suspension training is used as a dynamic bodyweight workout for athletes and gym goers alike.

**WHY YOU WOULD:** Suspension training gives bodyweight exercises an edge by adding instability. "It can create strength, muscle growth and muscular endurance, and allows for you to change angles in movement and level of experience," says Hopkins. According to research published in the *Journal of Sports and Science Medicine*, training with instability resulted in a 22 per cent gain in functional performance measures. Another study from the *Journal of Exercise Physiology* found that a suspended plank caused higher levels of core muscle activation than a floor-based plank. But before you grab the TRX, you should perfect your floor work first. "It is always ideal to start out first with rectifying postural imbalances and faulty movement recruitment first, otherwise these imbalances become even more pronounced with instability work," says Hopkins.

**TRY IT:** "Work on strength in a stable position first; next comes the unstable training mixed in with stable training, and then you can move to more suspension training sessions," says Hopkins. Suspension training is best used in a circuit, combining several exercises together to create a dynamic full-body workout.

**SCHEDULE IT:** Anytime! But don't let it cramp your current routine: research published in the *International Journal of Sports Science* concluded that TRX training was a moderate intensity workout, so shouldn't replace your resistance training or your HIIT. "It is a good training method, but should supplement rather than be the focus," says Hopkins.



SCAN PAGE FOR TRAINING TIPS TO MAXIMISE RESULTS



## = CONCURRENT TRAINING

There's nothing like a double-whammy workout, but if you're thinking of combining weights and cardio into one session, some caveats apply. "Again, the last thing you want to do is ask your muscles to work at their highest levels and to have your technique fail because you're already partially exhausted from your cardio," says Hopkins. This means that strength training is your main priority here, but don't overdo it if you're planning on keeping your gains. A heavy weights session would ideally be followed with body-growing nutrients and some rest, rather than another cardio session, for optimum muscle repair – so keep both trainings short and hard.

**WHY YOU WOULD:** It turns out that by combining weights and cardio into the one session you are unlocking some serious fat-burning potential. "Strength training will elevate the metabolism higher and has a longer time to return back down to a normal resting basal metabolic level," says Hopkins. This means that you'd be burning more fuel than you would by doing cardio alone, and more even at rest. Strength training also begins the process of glycogen depletion, after which you can start burning more fat.

**TRY IT:** "I would train strength first to get all its benefits and not sacrifice technique and performance, and then I would do the cardio on the already elevated metabolism to add to the burn," says Hopkins.

**SCHEDULE IT:** Anytime, but preferably when a post-workout snack is available. This could form part of your splits program, allowing for adequate rest between sessions.



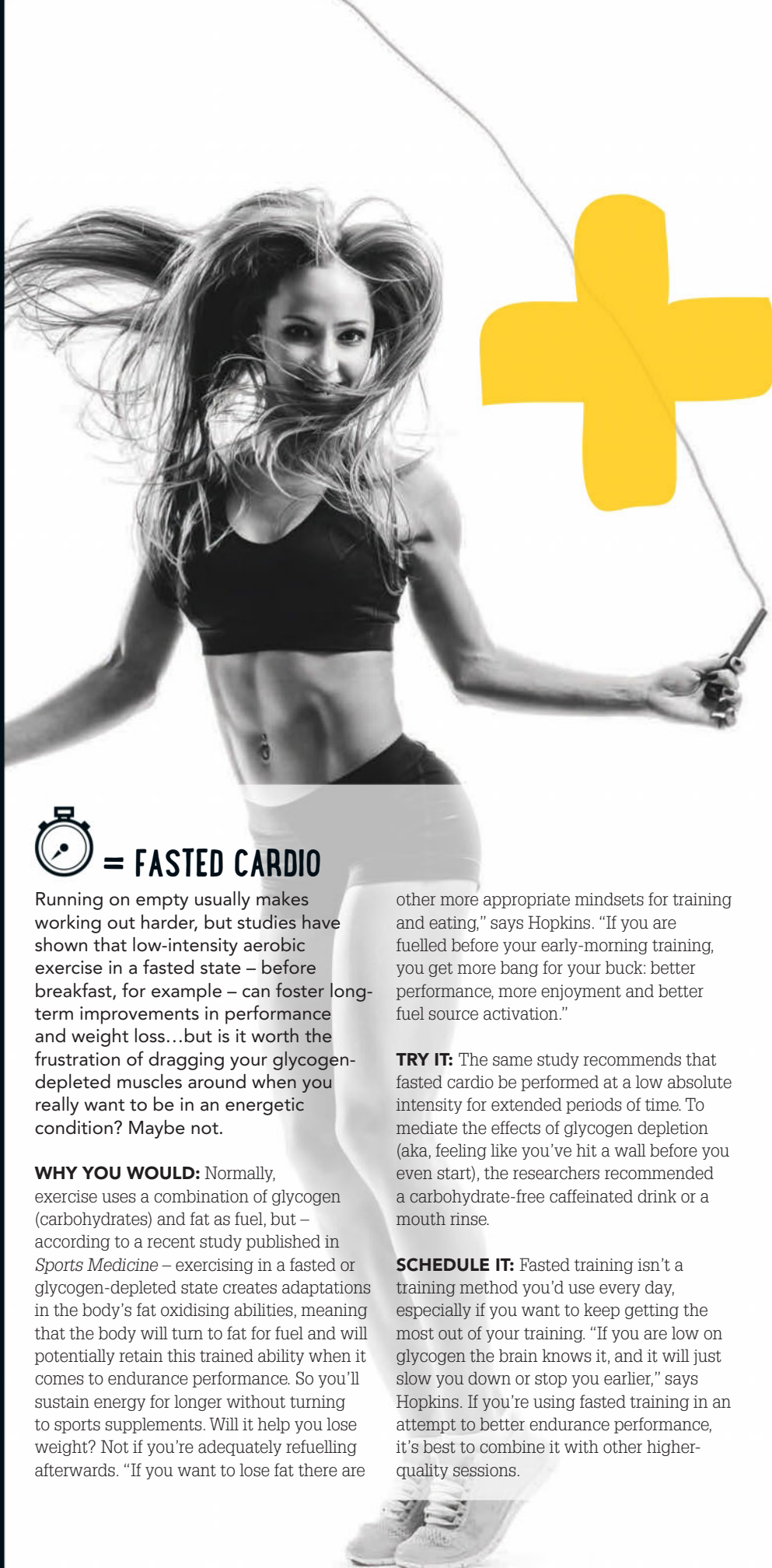
## = SUPERSETS

By combining two exercises into one set, supersets are a great way to guarantee some serious gains in the gym as well as upping the cardio-esque ante of your weights routine. They work by targeting opposing muscle groups in each exercise "So one side is resting while the other is being used, that way you can alternate back and forth without needing as much rest," says Hopkins. "So supersets save time and keep your metabolic rate and heart rate up too."

**WHY YOU WOULD:** Supersets are excellent for the time-poor (or the time-wasting) gym goer. A 2011 study published by Ohio University found that after 12 weeks of supersetting exercises, subjects demonstrated superior workout efficiency, as well as gains similar to or above those of traditional training. Another study, from Southern Connecticut State University, found that supersetting had a greater body-fat loss and increased aerobic fitness next to traditional weight training. Is there anything a superset can't do? Well according to Hopkins, if you're after a whole lot of strength and power, you'd better stick with splits. "It's all about volume. If you're lifting really heavy you need that recovery time between exercises to do it again."

**TRY IT:** Take your traditional weights routine and pair off exercises. "Choose two exercises that have opposite movement patterns, i.e. push or pull, or opposing muscle groups, e.g. chest and back, or that are unrelated," says Hopkins. "After two or three sets, usually you will need the full body to rest, so this is a great time to grab some water."

**SCHEDULE IT:** Supersetting is ideal for a whole body-strength workout, or in part of a split strength-training program (see page 72).



## = FASTED CARDIO

Running on empty usually makes working out harder, but studies have shown that low-intensity aerobic exercise in a fasted state – before breakfast, for example – can foster long-term improvements in performance and weight loss...but is it worth the frustration of dragging your glycogen-depleted muscles around when you really want to be in an energetic condition? Maybe not.

**WHY YOU WOULD:** Normally, exercise uses a combination of glycogen (carbohydrates) and fat as fuel, but – according to a recent study published in *Sports Medicine* – exercising in a fasted or glycogen-depleted state creates adaptations in the body's fat oxidising abilities, meaning that the body will turn to fat for fuel and will potentially retain this trained ability when it comes to endurance performance. So you'll sustain energy for longer without turning to sports supplements. Will it help you lose weight? Not if you're adequately refuelling afterwards. "If you want to lose fat there are

other more appropriate mindsets for training and eating," says Hopkins. "If you are fuelled before your early-morning training, you get more bang for your buck: better performance, more enjoyment and better fuel source activation."

**TRY IT:** The same study recommends that fasted cardio be performed at a low absolute intensity for extended periods of time. To mediate the effects of glycogen depletion (aka, feeling like you've hit a wall before you even start), the researchers recommended a carbohydrate-free caffeinated drink or a mouth rinse.

**SCHEDULE IT:** Fasted training isn't a training method you'd use every day, especially if you want to keep getting the most out of your training. "If you are low on glycogen the brain knows it, and it will just slow you down or stop you earlier," says Hopkins. If you're using fasted training in an attempt to better endurance performance, it's best to combine it with other higher-quality sessions.





## = CROSSFIT

CrossFit is the latest and greatest workout for people who want to push themselves to the absolute brink of their physical abilities, which usually goes hand in hand with great aerobic endurance and a shredded appearance. Although there seems to be a mentality that you either do CrossFit or you don't, in reality the safest way to take on these extreme workouts is to blend them into a gentler, more accepting routine.

**WHY YOU WOULD:** "CrossFit is very dynamic. I like that it uses functional and movement-based exercises," says Hopkins. "It starts off well, building strength and muscle and movement, but then usually gets pushed to the limits until the body starts collapsing, which means the body just recruits what is necessary to get the job done rather than the correct muscles or joints." This is true for any negative workout habit, but particularly true for the high-intensity nature of CrossFit. A recent study published in the *Orthopedic Journal of Sports Medicine* found that around 20 per cent of CrossFit participants sustain some form of injury from their training, usually in the shoulders or lower back. "Anyone beginning CrossFit would want to start with a strong foundation," says Hopkins.

**TRY IT:** Hit up your local CrossFit gym. According to the study, the involvement of trainers in coaching participants on their form and guiding them through the workout correlates with a decreased injury rate.

**SCHEDULE IT:** "If you are training CrossFit to just get fit and strong and not be pushed past your limits, there is nothing wrong with this, but add other variety of trainings and lesser intensities into your week as well," says Hopkins. CrossFit-style training is likely to amp up your DOMS to new levels; ensure you're fully recovered before attempting another session.



## = KETTLEBELL WORKOUTS

Kettlebell lifting has been a competitive sport in Russia since the 1960s, but – in smaller and more approachable sizes – kettlebells have made their way into the gym. Essentially, they can do everything a dumbbell can do but with the added bonus of handles. This makes them a go-to for dynamic strengthening exercises and high-intensity circuits.

**WHY YOU WOULD:** Kettlebells are a great way to combine weights and cardio into one dynamic workout.

According to ACE (American Council on Exercise) Fitness research, instead of lifting weights for half an hour then hopping on the treadmill for half an hour, you could do both with kettlebells in about 20 minutes. The same study estimated energy use in those 20 minutes to be around 272 calories.

**TRY IT:** "More functional movements can be used in kettlebell training," says Hopkins. This usually means swings and rotations, as well as more traditional strength exercises (like you'd do with dumbbells). The introduction of momentum and movement means that newbies need to train with care. "Technique and postural imbalances can be a problem, and acceleration and deceleration issues can arise, bringing about injury," says Hopkins.

**SCHEDULE IT:** More recent research from *Physical Therapy Reviews* noted that kettlebell training improved explosive strength by 19.8 per cent, but had no effect on aerobic endurance. The conclusion? Use it to get stronger and burn calories, but don't let it replace your cardio.



## = CIRCUIT TRAINING

The fitness circuit is a DIY answer to any of your fitness excuses. In the simplest sense: a fitness circuit allows you to cram a collection of personally curated exercises into a short period of time. "Circuits are great because they are easy to focus on and easy to follow – you just follow your plan and then it's done – plus you can have lots of variety of exercise in them, so a circuit can work for anyone," says Hopkins. "It's as simple as going to the park, doing four exercises three times each and walking home, or you could do a high-intensity circuit of cardio, posture and weights...it's just about what you want to get out of it."

**WHY YOU WOULD:** Research has proven that circuits mean more efficient workouts and, according to research published in the *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, they are also a great tool for smashing through plateaus using increased intensity and workload. The study recommended

circuit weight interval training (a combination of higher intensity intervals and weights exercises) because these circuits "may induce gains in muscular endurance, strength, and cardiovascular endurance" by targeting more than one aspect of fitness.

**TRY IT:** "I like doing circuits where I pick four exercises, perform each move for about a minute duration with no rest until all four moves are done – that puts them in a five-minute block – then I'll repeat that set one or two more times, repeat the same process of another circuit of different exercises, and then that's it," says Hopkins.

**SCHEDULE IT:** Your timing depends on your circuit. But, if you're engaging in circuit weight interval training, the aforementioned research recommends sufficient recovery between sessions – which means waiting until you're no longer sore to do another – to prevent overtraining.



Splits work by allowing your muscles to recover between heavy and high-volume weights workouts so they can be worked just as hard (or harder) in the next session. "When you do your exercise, you are splitting muscle fibres, so if it's hard you're actually splitting the fibres apart," says Hopkins. "When you're at rest they repair, grow new fibres and create bigger, stronger muscles." How long does it take? Often, delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) usually takes around 24 hours or longer to rear its ugly head, so we're talking at least a day or so. "The thing is, if you're doing that volume of work, you need more than one night to recover, because it's heavy and it's a lot of work," says Hopkins.

**WHY YOU WOULD:** Splits are designed for growing bigger and stronger muscles, which means pushing yourself to the limit in each session, feeling the soreness over the next few days and doing it all again later. If perky biceps and days of DOMS don't float your boat, chances are splits aren't for you: "If you're doing splits, you're not doing easy training, you're doing hard training," says Hopkins. "Splits usually result in a higher volume of working being achieved; this volume

will create greater strength, power or muscle growth if that is the goal."

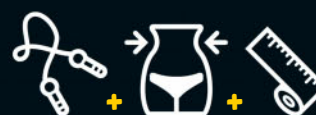
**TRY IT:**

- » Muscle strength: 6–8 reps
- » Muscle power: 2–6 reps
- » Muscle growth: 8–12 reps
- Sets: 3+

**YOU'VE GOT TWO OPTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO SPLITS:**

The old-school way is splitting into muscle groups; the new way is to look at push or pull movement patterns. "So usually one 'movement' pattern will be trained in one session; for example, I'd do 'push' exercises one day, then 'pull' exercises the next, then legs with core," says Hopkins.

**SCHEDULE IT:** If you're trying to match your cardio to your weights training, Hopkins recommends leaving it until after a session. "If you're looking at shorter, higher intensity or longer duration cardio training, I would schedule it after your splits, because the last thing you want to do is ask your muscles to work at their highest levels and to have your technique fail because you're already partially exhausted from your cardio," says Hopkins. "This is because strength training is anabolic in nature, so its primary goal is to 'grow', whereas cardio is catabolic." This means that cardio is best performed on days between strength sessions or after.



**= PLYOMETRIC WORKOUTS**

Also known as 'jump training', plyometric workouts involve a series of jump-based moves that have been proven to benefit agility and power. This is largely thanks to something called the stretch shortening cycle. This is where the muscles experience an intense stretch (e.g. a squat part of a squat-jump) and an intense contraction (jump), which assists in the storage of elastic energy in the skeletal muscle. In lay terms: it's like stretching a rubber band and letting it go.

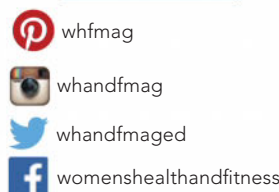
**WHY YOU WOULD:** Aside from scoring the perk of a HIIT workout, plyometrics has also proven to be effective in increasing the power (that's strength and speed combined) and agility of leg muscles. One study published in *Biology of Sport* found that plyometric training improved knee flexion (landing) as well as jump performance – making it perfect for some sports. But being the high-impact and high-intensity aspect of plyometric training also makes it ideal for HIIT workouts.

**TRY IT:** Typical plyometric exercises include the drop jump (e.g. jumping off a box and onto the ground with soft knees) and the counter movement jump (e.g. a squat jump), but plyometric workouts can contain a mix of jumping, bounding and hopping drills. Speaking to a trainer about form and technique is advised.

**SCHEDULE IT:** "Plyometrics can be done alone in training or can be added into a circuit or full-body training session, or even one or two bursts in a leg workout," says Hopkins. "Technique and postural alignment is paramount, and usually no more than one session a week, usually of around 20 minutes, can usually be tolerated by the body." ■



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# 9 TIPS

## for SPRING FITNESS



Spring has sprung – cue the scramble to get in shape before summer sets in. Post-winter fitness regimes are often built on a desire for rapid results – hello, imminent burnout. This spring, give hasty mistakes the flick with these tips from top personal trainer and nutrition expert Kim Beach. Her shape-up philosophy is all about balance and finding ways to keep the peace between fun, fitness and food.

### 1 DON'T WEIGH YOURSELF EVERY DAY.

"This will allow you to focus on the positive things you need to do to achieve your goals and not let the scales dictate your emotions. I recommend weighing in weekly or fortnightly as this will show your real results.

### 2 SET YOUR EXPECTATIONS CORRECTLY AT THE START IF WEIGHT LOSS IS YOUR GOAL.

"It's going to take time and effort, so don't expect to see results in the first week or two; stay consistent and your results will come."

### 3 AGREE TO COMMIT TO YOUR GOALS 80 PER CENT OF THE TIME.

"I call it my 80/20 rule; then you

don't have to feel bad if you do indulge occasionally or miss a workout. It's about developing a positive relationship with food and exercise that doesn't involve guilt.

### 4 DON'T OVERTRAIN.

"Overtraining can lead to fatigue and will have a negative impact on your weight loss goals. Remember, when it comes to training, it's about quality, not quantity. Give your body time to rest and recover and it will thank you for it."

### 5 FITNESS IN THE KITCHEN.

"Respect your body by fuelling it with whole foods and remember self-control and portion size are your best friends. Eighty per cent of maintaining the body you want comes down to what you eat rather than how hard you train. Most people have this the wrong way around."

### 6 DITCH CALORIE COUNTING.

"It's restrictive and in my opinion takes you down a negative path when it comes to how you think about food. Instead, focus on eating whole foods with a high nutritional value."

### 7

#### STOP COMPARING YOURSELF.

"Don't compare yourself to other people as you will never be happy with your results. Be on your own journey and work towards creating the best version of you."

### 8 WEIGHT TRAINING.

"I strongly recommend weight training to every woman. There are so many benefits, especially when it comes to weight loss and the ability to give your body shape."

### 9 MAKE YOUR HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FUN.

"Train with friends and get creative with your food. You need to find that balance where you are working hard towards your goals but also still living your life!"

To meet Kim and access more of her tips and advice, head to the Fitness & Health Expos.

Kim will appear at the Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre, 11–13 September and Sydney Showground, Sydney Olympic Park, 16–18 October. Visit [www.fitnessexpo.com.au](http://www.fitnessexpo.com.au) for more information. ■



YOUR BEST >> MOVE IT

# 7-Minute ABS

Photography: Noel Daganta  
Words/workout:  
Melissa Le Man (pictured)  
@melissa\_leman



**T**he word 'abs' is deceptively light on complexity and detail. Beside their role in narratives pertaining to bikinis, abdominals serve as a scaffold for standing, sitting, jumping, running, all day, every day. The serendipitous fact is that in training your midsection for greater functionality and freedom of movement, you can also craft a defined chick pack. This workout leverages anatomical science to elicit maximum response from your body in minimum time. In just seven minutes, you can target your entire six-pack region. All you need is good music, a bench and a light dumbbell. You will feel the burn, but it will be over before you can say 'Lycra'.

## THE RULES:

Perform seven exercises in the listed order for 45 seconds each with a 15-second rest between.

| EXERCISE              | WORKING SET | REST   |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------|
| Seated Leg Tuck       | 45 sec      | 15 sec |
| DB Lying Leg Raises   | 45 sec      | 15 sec |
| Slam Ball Twists      | 45 sec      | 15 sec |
| Heel-Elevated Sit-ups | 45 sec      | 15 sec |
| Tuck and Drive        | 45 sec      | 15 sec |
| Mountain Climbers     | 45 sec      | 15 sec |
| Power Crunches        | 45 sec      | 15 sec |



## 1. Seated Leg Tuck

**Targeted Muscles: Abs**

1. Sit on a bench with the legs stretched out in front of you, slightly below parallel, and your arms holding on to the sides of the bench. Your torso should be leaning backwards around a 45-degree angle from the bench. This will be your starting position.

2. Bring the knees in toward you as you move your torso closer to them at the same time. Breathe out as you perform this movement.

3. After a second pause, go back to the starting position as you inhale.





## 2. DB Lying Leg Raises

### Targeted Muscles: Abs

1. Place a light dumbbell between your feet; secure it by making sure your heels are touching.
2. Lie with your back flat on a bench and your legs extended in front of you off the end.
3. Place your hands at the back of your flat bench and grip tightly. This will be your starting position.
4. As you keep your legs extended, straight as possible with your knees slightly bent but locked, raise your legs until they make a 45-degree angle with the floor. Exhale as you perform this portion of the movement and hold the contraction at the top for a second.
5. Now, as you inhale, lower your legs back down to the starting position.



Try this exercise with no weight at first, then if comfortable start with a 1 or 2kg DB. Advanced level would seek a 3 to 5kg DB. It is important to keep your back as flat as possible into the bench when lifting the DB up into the air to ensure your abs are engaged and doing all of the work rather than your lower back.



## 3. Slam Ball Twists

### Targeted Muscles: Abs and Lats

1. Sit on a bench with your legs stretched out in front of you, ankles crossed, slightly below parallel and your arms holding your medicine ball. Your torso should be leaning backwards around a 45-degree angle from the bench. This will be your starting position.

2. Keeping your core engaged, take the medicine ball and slam it down onto the floor to one side, catching it on the full.

3. Twist your upper body slightly to take the medicine ball to your other side, repeating this slamming motion with force.

4. Repeat by taking the ball from one side to the other.

## 4. Heel-Elevated Sit-Ups

### Targeted Muscles: Abs

1. To begin, lie down with your back pressed against the floor. Your arms should be lying by your sides.

2. Elevate your legs and bend your knees at a 90-degree angle and cross your ankles over one another.

3. Lift your torso towards your knees so your arms reach for your ankles.

4. Lower yourself back to starting position.



If you cannot lift your torso all the way off the ground, you can perform a crunch where your aim is to elevate the shoulders off the ground and aim to touch your calf muscles.





## 5. Tuck and Drive

### Targeted Muscles: Abs

1. Lie on a flat bench with your legs off the end.
2. Place your hands at the back of your flat bench and grip tightly.
3. Bend your knees and pull your upper thighs into your midsection as you breathe out. This will be your starting position.
4. Extend your legs directly above you so that they are perpendicular to the ground. Keep your core switched on tight.
5. Lower yourself back down into starting position (knees into chest).



## 7. Power Crunches

### Targeted Muscles: Abs

1. Standing shoulder-width apart with your core braced, raise one knee to meet the opposite elbow with explosive force before returning to stationary position.
2. Repeat with the opposite leg to create an alternating movement. ■



Exhale at each point the knee reaches the opposite arm's elbow to contract the abdominal muscles.

## 6. Mountain Climbers

### Targeted Muscles: Abs

1. Begin in a push-up position off a flat bench, with your weight supported by your hands and toes.
2. Flexing the knee and hip, bring one leg up until the knee is approximately under the opposite shoulder.
3. Explosively reverse the positions of your legs, extending the bent leg until the leg is straight and supported by the toe, and bringing the other foot up with the hip and knee flexed. ■





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**LINDOR BALLS, RUM  
BALLS, ANY CHOCOCIE  
INDULGENCE!**



*Recipe by*  
**RITA CATOLINO**  
[yourbeautyfuel.com](http://yourbeautyfuel.com)

“THESE CHOCOLATEY BALLS ARE FULL OF UNPROCESSED GOODNESS AND THEIR CHEWY TEXTURE IS REMINISCENT OF MELTY, TONGUE-DANCE-WORTHY CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES. TRY COATING THEM IN DIFFERENT SPRINKLES SUCH AS COCONUT, DRIED FRUIT, CHIA SEEDS AND HEMP SEEDS.”

**NUTRITION  
(PER SERVE)**



210 KJ,  
5 G CARBS,  
3.5 G SUGAR

VS



565 KJ,  
20 G CARBS,  
10 G SUGAR

#### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 1 cup soaked, pitted Medjool dates
- 1 cup nuts (pecan, walnut, almond, Brazil, or a mix)
- ¼ cup unsweetened natural coconut
- Organic 72% chocolate (for coating)
- Extra coconut or favourite seeds (optional, for coating)

#### WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Place dates, nuts and coconut in food processor and process until a thick paste forms – not too smooth but almost like chunky nut butter. Collect heaped teaspoons of mixture and form balls between your palms. Melt chocolate on stove or in microwave and dip truffles to coat or half coat. You may choose to roll them in coconut or nut pieces or leave as is. For straight date balls, roll while slightly sticky at room temperature in coconut or nuts. Keep in an airtight container or freeze until needed. They get chewier in the freezer and don't freeze to rock hard. ■



# SUPERSETS

## FOR SUPER LEGS

Photography: Noel Daganta // Words/workout: Melissa Le Man  
(pictured) // @melissa\_leman

**N**o matter what your body shape, strengthening your legs is guaranteed to put a spring in your step. This workout combines optimal moves for each part of your pins to bring out their natural definition while promoting even distribution of muscle. Following the system of one compound exercise (dig deep and push heavy in these ones), superset straight into a plyometric exercise (rapid, explosive movements – yes, these ones hurt).

### THE RULES

PERFORM  
IN THE  
FOLLOWING  
ORDER:

| EXERCISE                                   | REPS                                  | SET                  |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| DUMBBELL SPLIT SQUATS                      | 12                                    | 3 sets beginners     |
| SIDE-TO-SIDE BOX SQUATS                    | 30                                    | 4 to 5 sets advanced |
| DUMBBELL STIFF-LEG DEADLIFT WITH EXTENSION | 12                                    | 3 sets beginners     |
| SCISSOR LUNGES                             | 30                                    | 4 to 5 sets advanced |
| DUMBBELL CURTSY LUNGES                     | 12                                    | 3 sets beginners     |
| SPEED SKATERS                              | 30                                    | 4 to 5 sets advanced |
| FITBALL HAMSTRING ROLL-INS                 | 25 reps beginners<br>50 reps advanced | 1 set                |





## DUMBBELL SPLIT SQUAT

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings, Calves

1. Start by standing about two to three feet in front of a flat bench with your back facing the bench. Have your dumbbells in your hands. Tip: Your feet should be shoulder-width apart from each other.
2. Move one foot back so that your toe is resting on the flat bench. Your other foot should be stationary in front of you. Keep your head up at all times as looking down will get you off balance and also maintain a straight back.
3. As you inhale, slowly lower your leg until your standing thigh is parallel to the floor. At this point, your back knee should be near the ground.
4. Leading with the chest and hips and contracting the quadriceps, elevate your leg back to the starting position as you exhale.



**TIP:** In your squat position, make sure you push your glutes back and stay down low with your chest up.

## SIDE-TO-SIDE BOX SQUATS

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Glutes, Hamstrings, Quads, Calves

1. Stand to one side of a bench or box and place the inside foot up onto your bench.
2. Get in a squat position and then push through both feet to propel yourself into the air and over the step, landing in a squat position.
3. Immediately upon landing, jump up and back over to the starting position.



**TIP:** This exercise is best performed when you brace your core and control the movement on the way down and speed the movement on the way up with intensity.

## DUMBBELL STIFF-LEG DEADLIFT WITH EXTENSION

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Hamstrings, Calves, Glutes, Lower Back

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a pair of dumbbells at your sides. Keep your chest up and shoulders back.
2. Bend the knees slightly and keep the shins vertical, hips back and back straight.
3. Keeping your back and arms completely straight, bend at the hips and lower the dumbbells as low as you can without curling your back.
4. When you reach full stretch of your hamstrings, swing the dumbbells out in front of you to create greater tension and then allow them to swing back in as you reverse the movement while contracting your hamstrings to bring you back to starting position.







**TIP:** Make sure you get low with your lunge to utilise your glutes as much as possible.

## SCISSOR LUNGES

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Quads, Glutes, Hamstrings

1. Assume a lunge-stance position with one foot forward with the knee bent, and the rear knee nearly touching the ground.
2. Extending through both legs, jump as high as possible, swinging your arms to gain lift.
3. As you jump as high as you can, switch the position of your legs, moving your front leg to the back and the rear leg to the front.
4. As you land, absorb the impact through the legs by adopting the lunge position, and repeat.



**TIP:** Take your backward angle lunge nice and low to ensure your glute has full activation and you gain maximum results.

## DUMBBELL CURTSY LUNGES

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Glutes, Hamstrings, Quads

1. Stand feet shoulder-width apart. Holding a pair of dumbbells at your side, keep your chest up and shoulders retracted back.
2. Step your right leg backwards into a modified lunge position where your foot crosses behind and to the left of your front leg. This curtsy-type position will get your glute and adductor firing.
3. Step back up to starting position and repeat lunge on the opposite leg.



## SPEED SKATERS

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Glutes, Hamstrings, Quads

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees to lower your body 20 to 25 centimetres and lean forward until your shoulders are positioned above your knees. Even though you are leaning over, you should do so by bending at the waist while maintaining good posture in your upper back.
2. Begin by powerfully hopping sideways about two feet and landing on your right foot.
3. Hop sideways again so you land back on the left foot, and repeat.

## FIT BALL HAMSTRING ROLL-INS

**TARGETED MUSCLES:** Hamstrings, Calves, Glutes

1. On the floor, lie on your back with your feet on top of the ball.
2. Position the ball so that when your legs are extended, your ankles are on top of the ball. This will be your starting position.
3. Raise your hips off the ground, keeping your weight on the shoulder blades and your feet.
4. Flex the knees, pulling the ball as close to you as you can, contracting the hamstrings.
5. After a brief pause, return to the starting position. ■





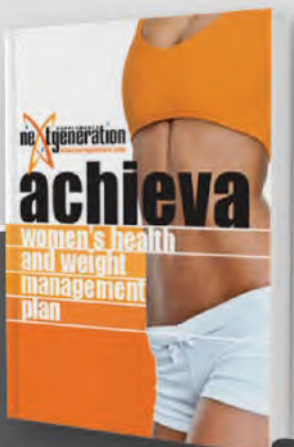
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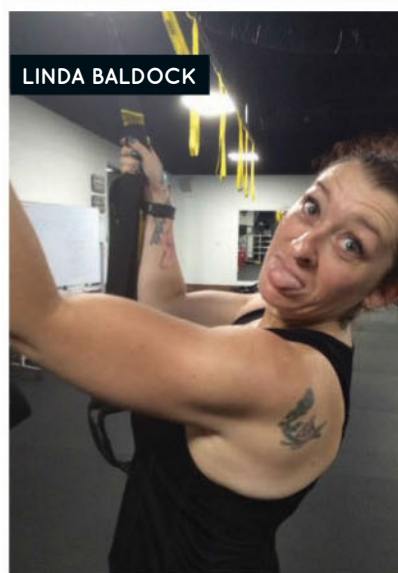
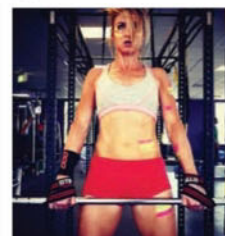


# RAW FITSPO

*be your own hero.*

Want to be part of our raw fitspo? Watch our Facebook page for callouts. (Filter free, please.)

It might be easy to curl up in the comfort zone, but *WH&F* trainer and cover model Sheena-Lauren lives by the message, "Life is far too short to just be average. Be Queen."



*Say out loud...*  
THIS IS WHO I AM, THIS IS  
WHAT I WANT.





“Life is about discovering and creating ourselves,” says Sheena-Lauren. As a trainer, she believes in helping people find their “inner, most powerful confidence and say yes to your aspirations and dreams”. This doesn’t mean lusting after the set of chiseled abdominals you spotted on Instagram, it’s more about finding out exactly what you want from your fitness, and fighting for it. “The message I want to share is to always strive for greater things, but the key here is what your ‘greater’ goals are set against,” she says. “There

is a fine line between wanting to be better or look better and the reality of achieving and maintaining this, which is a key difference between a healthy and fit lifestyle and a negative one.”

Striving for better-ness can be a confidence catch 22. On one end of the inner peace spectrum we have self-acceptance, and on the other we have the desire to always be better than the person we were yesterday. This month, we’re asking you to find a place in the middle where you can challenge yourself, sans angst. “It’s important to take a step back every now and again and get perspective: your aim

should be to be your best version, which takes into account your lifestyle and, most importantly, eliminates the discrepancy between ‘that image’ and your happiness,” says Sheena-Lauren. “I want to remind you that there are no two of us alike. You can’t go comparing yourself to the girl next to you, or your abs to the abs in a picture – when we do, that’s when striving to be better and greater can be dangerous and unhealthy.” If you feel building a booty that’ll make Kimmy-K jealous is

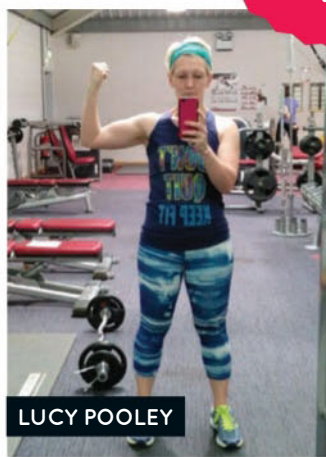
fundamental to your happiness, go ahead. But fitness (and beauty) comes in many forms, and what’s important is that you’re doing what gives you the confidence to be your best version. “I like to question comfort zones,” says Sheena-Lauren. “The gym is a place I discover a lot about myself, and all women should believe in themselves and appreciate their individual strengths, not one woman should ever think less [of herself].”

I ROCK UP,  
AND SAY TO  
MYSELF  
‘BRING  
IT.’



TIFFANIE BAYS

IT'S  
NEVER A  
QUESTION  
OF  
*‘can you’,*  
BUT  
*‘will you?’*



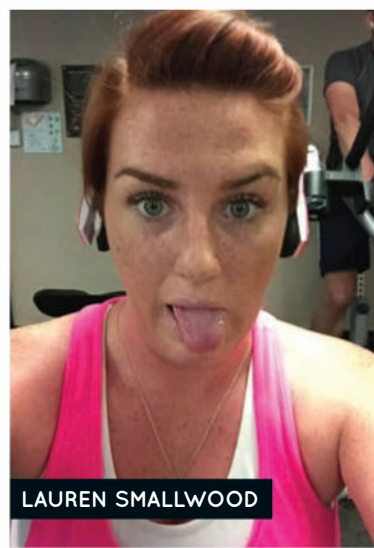
LUCY POOLEY



CHERISE VANNIEKERK



SAMANTHA WILSON



LAUREN SMALLWOOD

IF IT WAS  
*easy,*  
EVERYONE  
WOULD DO  
IT. IT'S THE  
*‘hard’*  
THAT  
MAKES YOU  
GREAT.



*Be your own hero, your own  
motivation, be your best you.*

Get Sheena-Lauren's Eat Like a Warrior Queen and Work out like a Warrior Queen at [sheenalauren.com](http://sheenalauren.com).



# SPIN CITY

Bike your way to tight and toned with this 4-week indoor/outdoor cycling plan

**T**here's a persistent yet unfounded myth about cycling. One, it'll turn your butt into a life-size replica of Jessica Rabbit's. Two, it'll turn your butt into a life-size replica of Jessica Rabbit's. Three...you get the picture. Yet not only is the mythology fallacious – it outright defies reality. In fact, cycling is among the most efficient cardio workouts for fat burning and lower body sculpting. Research shows that high-intensity sprint cycling helps get you lean, mean, and fit fast. According to the American Council of Exercise, 30 seconds of big gear, full-throttle sprinting sends your levels of human growth hormone (the one that helps boost

lean muscle and burn fat) soaring 530 per cent. In other words, short bike-based sprint workouts kickstart your metabolism and keep it elevated well after you're off the bike and sipping your mocha latte. Between my background in triathlon and years of teaching spinning, I can attest to the whole-body results.

What's more, it's easy to synch with body weight, CrossFit, running and body-part workouts (see p. 68). Whether you prefer to tune out the world and pedal to your favourite BPM tracks or thrive on outdoor adventures, this low-impact workout will tick your fun and phenomenal butt and thigh goals.

## Which spinner are you?

### WEEKEND WARRIOR

An hour of off-road riding burns as much as 600 calories – more than cruising the same period of time on the road – and it works your whole body, not just your legs or butt. The onus on your core to maintain balance on uneven terrain makes off-road mountain biking a knockout core and upper body workout. (Nothing like a tree root to test your obliques.) If you're keen to log hop, you can buy special fat tyres and get dirty. You can turn your cardio sesh into a social spin date with a friend to multi-task.

### ACTIVE COMMUTER

No other form of exercise reconciles transportation and toning goals quite like cycling. If your city or area has well-lit paths and good cycle lanes, throw your work gear in a backpack once or twice a week and use your thighs and glutes. On other days or when it's raining, take your training indoors at one of the new cycle studios. Try specialist studios Pelotone and KX Cycle or Kaya Health Clubs, which offer spinning.



# PLAN YOUR RIDES



**A**  
**"I can cycle for 1 hour during weekdays and 2 hours on the weekend"**

Why not split up your one hour during the week to 2 x 30-min sessions and a longer ride on the weekend?

**B**  
**"I can cycle for 2 hours during the weekdays and up to 4 hours on the weekend"**

Plan some indoor spin classes along with a 30-min cycle AFTER a resistance workout and perhaps an outdoor fun ride on the weekend with friends.

**C**  
**"I have limited time available – the most I can do is a sub-hour session twice a week"**

Split that time up and think about hiring a stationary bike for the winter at home and do 4 x 20-min interval sessions each week!

**D**  
**"I need to look at cycling with my young children as I do not have much time alone"**

Same as point C. Consider renting a stationary bike and hopping on while they're asleep. Regular smaller workouts trump the occasional long workout anytime!

## Bike perks at a glance

GET YOUR SPIN ON  
 AND TICK THESE BOXES  
 IN JUST 28 DAYS!

Words/workout:  
 Nikki Fogden-Moore  
 (pictured)

Photography: Ashley  
 Streff Photography

Gear: Duskii Active  
 and Specialized

“  
**RESEARCH SHOWS  
 THAT HIGH-INTENSITY  
 SPRINT CYCLING  
 HELPS GET YOU  
 LEAN, MEAN,  
 AND FIT FAST**  
 ”



» **Improved cardiovascular health** (the ability for your heart to efficiently pump and regulate oxygenated blood in your body)

» **Low impact** on joints

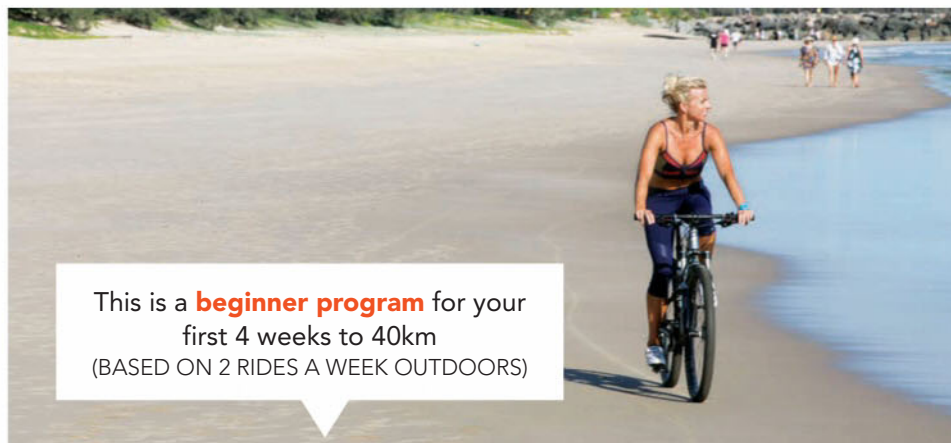
» **Fat burning:** Uses the biggest muscle group (legs and gluteus) thus aiding fat burning, promotion of lean muscle mass and overall toning, and get buns of steel. Really.

» **Ideal for low levels of fitness:** Not about strength but technique

» **Builds strength:** Once you build up your technique, you can work on adding extra resistance for strength

» **Works your core:** If you cycle correctly, you will be using your core muscles at all times

» **Fun:** When exercise is fun it sends even more endorphins through your body as you're not punishing your body. The social aspect adds to the time you can spend exercising; it creates a moment to connect physically and mentally that increases your emotional wellbeing. A healthy heart = a happy heart.



This is a **beginner program** for your first 4 weeks to 40km  
(BASED ON 2 RIDES A WEEK OUTDOORS)

## Notes:

- ☑ Time based rather than distance
- ☑ Train with a buddy
- ☑ Mix up outdoor with RPM or wind trainer sessions
- ☑ 'Easy ride' – just go out for a nice chat with nature, practise
- ☑ 'Up-tempo ride' – put some intervals into it
- ☑ 'Technique' – practise your technique
- ☑ STRETCH AFTER EVERY RIDE

## WEEK 1

### Getting started

#### ► Beginner

Ride 1: 25 min  
Ride 2: 25 min

#### ► Moderately fit

Ride 1: 45 min  
Ride 2: 60 min

#### ► Pretty fit, thanks

Ride 1: 1 hour  
Ride 2: 1.5 hour

## WEEK 2

### Building Up

#### ► Beginner

Ride 1: 30-min easy ride working on pedal stroke skills – working on looking ahead. (If you're outdoors, work on indicating turns and pointing out obstacles in the road.)  
Ride 2: 45-min easy ride on flat terrain just to do the time and don't worry about the distance.

#### ► Moderately fit

Ride 1: 45 mins – working on pedal skills and cycle position. Abs on the whole time. Upper body relaxed.  
Ride 2: 1-hr 15-min mixed terrain ride with some extra effort put in for slight incline and hills.

#### ► Pretty fit, thanks

Ride 1: Up-tempo quick session for cardio – 45 min with some hills (add resistance for the hills indoor) then 15 min on the end, moderate intensity, to tick the legs over.  
Ride 2: 2-hr ride mixed terrain. See how you feel with cardio and recovery afterwards.

## WEEK 3

### Strength and conditioning

#### ► Beginner

Ride 1: 45 min learning to change the tempo and spin the legs faster, changing gears, and try standing up out of the saddle for short periods  
Ride 2: 1 hr to 1-hr 15-min easy ride to get used to more time on the bike. Think about technique and maybe join a beginner group ride.

#### ► Moderately fit

Ride 1: 1-hr 30-min quality session on the bike. Cycle with a buddy to help set pace and practise changing over who is in the front. Keep a safe distance with your front wheel when behind and eyes up at all times.  
Ride 2: 2-hr ride – starting

to build on the endurance cardio and at times up-tempo for some anaerobic work. Becoming more efficient on the bike? Go for a lighter gear but higher reps/cadence.

#### ► Pretty fit, thanks

Ride 1: 2-hr ride with the focus on breaking it down into a warm-up, intervals x 5 with 2–5km blocks depending on how you feel and then cool down with technique focus on pedal strike and pull/rotation.  
Ride 2: 2.5-hr ride. Find some hills if you can or notch up the gears to load up those legs for a good quad-blasting session. Practise some more time out of the saddle for climbs or sprints.

## WEEK 4

### Pump it up. This is your 40km mark!

#### ► Beginner

Ride 1: 1-hr ride where you can combine all the skills you have learnt and maybe look at getting some proper cycle shoes you can clip in. These are great for spinning classes too as they give you great stability and better technique.  
Ride 2: 2-hr ride. This is a great way to end phase one. Go with a group or with some friends and head out for a solid two hours on the bike. Take plenty of hydration with you and focus on a comfortable posture with

shoulders down, but relaxed and eyes up at all times. Find some new scenery even if it means driving to a new start point. Or join a charity ride in your area as a nice challenge and way to give back.

#### ► Moderately fit

Ride 1: 1-hr 30-min morning session of easy riding with a group or even on the wind trainer/indoors.  
Ride 2: 2.5-hr+ ride. This is a well-deserved quality session on the bike with some friends and fresh air. Once again, have

a good breakfast or nutritious snack before you train and pack a bar and some good electrolyte-replacing hydration for on the ride itself. Even indoors! There is nothing worse than getting two hours into a ride and your tank is empty.

#### ► Pretty fit, thanks

Ride 1: 2-hr morning session with some solid RPM. Have fun out there!  
Ride 2: 3-hr long ride! Yep. A solid morning out on the bike with some cycling friends, some new terrain and perhaps even

**Note:** When you read 'terrain' in the program and you're on a stationary bike or in a flat area outside, use the resistance to create mixed terrain. Add more resistance for hills and change the levels to mix it up.

join a group ride in your area. Don't worry about speed, just focus on the total time in the saddle, having the right fuel and hydration to keep you going. I always take two drink bottles with a good-quality electrolyte-replacement drink on longer rides and a protein bar.



# GEAR BOX



Without fail, **a helmet** is a must if you are outdoors. Take it from someone who has met the tarmac or forest floor many times – helmets save lives.



**Padded bike pants.** Protect your assets! If you have a cruiser bike for around the city or town, these aren't necessary, but since you're interested in getting fit on your bike, you will most probably have a smaller saddle.



**The right saddle:** Everyone is different, so select a saddle that feels the most comfortable. Every bike comes with a saddle/seat – you can change them to suit you or upgrade to a more ergonomic version.

Female-specific saddles are also available as they provide more support and are slightly wider than men's.



**Bike shoes:** These are not necessary but once you've picked up the pace and got some experience, cycling with clip-in pedals make the world of difference for efficiency, power and speed. Clip-in systems are adjustable while you are learning, so you can easily clip in and clip out and you can adjust the setting as you get more experienced. Mountain bikers often use a double system that allows for a flat pedal when you are going over tricky terrain and clip in when you want to pick up the speed. This is a great option if you are learning.



## ROCKET FUEL

If you're planning to ride for 20 to 30 minutes, consider a fasted ride before brekkie. According to a study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, fasted rides burn more fat than those done after fuelling up. Andrew Pruitt, Ed.D., director of the Boulder Center for Sports Medicine in Colorado says, "When I travelled with USA Cycling, the riders couldn't have breakfast until they pedalled for 20 minutes." ■



Whether you are cycling as a means to lose weight or just increase your fitness, it is important to recognise that an essential part of the program is what you put into your body.

Up to 80 per cent of having a sustainable healthy body is due to good food choices. No matter how much exercise you do – you are what you eat. It's what's on the inside that counts. When you start to see

the benefits of exercise, you'll see this threefold combined with good nutrient-rich fresh foods. By the time your skin is glowing and you jump out of bed in the morning, you can be assured that your internal organs and functions are running optimally.

In a nutshell, you'll want to follow these guidelines for looking, feeling and training at your personal best:

### 1 Carbohydrates are not evil.

They are a necessary part of your nutritional mix, as nature intended. It is important to select the right forms of carbohydrates. Anything man made should be avoided as our bodies are not designed to break down and assimilate all those chemicals and artificial flavours.

Examples of **healthy, energy-providing carbs** that won't spike your insulin levels:

- ✓ Dark rye or stoneground flour toast with natural peanut butter as a pre-cycle option
- ✓ Oats
- ✓ Rice (including rice pastas)

#### Avoid:

- ✗ White breads, pastas, packaged rolls, processed carbs, fried foods, 'nutrient enriched' breads
- ✗ Carb-loaded drinks and bars with ingredients you can't pronounce
- ✗ Anything with fructose corn syrup added.

### 2 Protein for after your exercise.

Repairs muscles, supports the immune system and is vital for the healthy function of organs and your body's biodynamic function.

**3 Fats:** Essential healthy fats oil your joints and are crucial for eyesight, brain and organ function. Not manmade processed fats and oils. Instead hunt for these in your market or supermarket aisle and stock up each week. Avocado, cashews, almonds, macadamia, non-farmed non-GM salmon.

**4 Amino acids:** Our body does not produce amino acids – but

they are found in food sources.

### 5 Vitamins and minerals from nutrient-rich food:

Fresh vegetables and fruit are nature's supplements. Rather than being stripped out of plants as extracts, you are getting the minerals and vitamins in their ideal combination to work at their optimal levels.

The darker the colour of the vegetable, the better it is for you. Vegetables and fruits also contain essential water, which hydrates the body and aids the transportation of sugars, fats, carbs and nutrients throughout your body.



**6 Water:** Nothing beats good-quality filtered water. At least 2.5 litres per day to keep your body ticking over like a well-oiled machine. Ditch the high-fructose 'sports drinks' and opt for water along with a balanced diet. Once you start to go over and above two hours on the bike, you can add a natural electrolyte powder from a reputable company that does not add aspartame, sweeteners and artificial elements. Magnesium and potassium are key for recovery of the muscles as well.

# RIPPLE *effect*

Poolside mocktails, massage and an A-list setting turn a Pilates bootcamp into a luxe escape with bonus ripples.

Words: Rebecca Long



Within moments of climbing out of the air-conditioned four-wheel drive that's whisked me from Koh Samui airport up a steep jungle-flanked driveway to a compound that looks like a paparazzi shot from an A-list honeymoon, I'm leaning off the bench in the open air lobby pointing to my butt. "I don't really want to touch this," I say, apologising for decimating the

precisely curated schedule for my three-day stay. Truth is, I couldn't give a flying lychee about my derriere or thighs. It mightn't be politically correct (Pilates purists cringe at the populist reduction of their craft to six-packism), but the reason I've signed up for Absolute Sanctuary's reformer Pilates bootcamp and not, say, the equally renowned yoga retreat or food-free detox is my abs (sorry, core). Hey, if the reformer's good enough for Alessandra Ambrosio – and Google swears it is – it's good enough for moi. Which is why, after some negotiation



## NEED TO KNOW

Absolute Sanctuary's Pilates bootcamps run for five or seven days starting at \$3,925 per single or \$3,495 per person twin share. Four airlines make multiple daily trips between Bangkok and Koh Samui with fares starting at about \$170. For further information visit [absolutesanctuary.com](http://absolutesanctuary.com)



and a cursory anatomy refresher on the merits of peripheral moves for core strength and the old abdominus cluster, we're replacing the butt and thighs sessions in my bulging timetable for abs and arms and adding an extra session of Absolute's exclusive Core Blast program – think TRX meets Cirque du Soleil. It will slot between the massage appointments geared to rapid recovery to optimise my program and ensure I feel as though I'm suitably R, R 'n' Rd (reformer Pilates, rest and relaxation). So far, so a million miles from the militaristic line-up I feared from the 'b' word, which promises to get guests long, lean and toned in the environs of a Moroccan-inspired resort overlooking the palm-fringed gulf of Thailand. I can even watch the sun set over the ocean from the yoga mat beside my cloudlike bed. Sigh.

Despite having landed in paradise, I'm not going to pretend I was sold on the whole fitness vacation thing. I've always taken offshore fitness camps with the same grain of iodised salt as spree-based franchises such as *The Biggest Loser*. In my mind, anyone can turn up to gym twice a day when their only other commitments are a morning yoga class and sipping from a coconut; the key to lasting fitness is consistency, not a BPM bender. It quickly becomes clear that despite its promise of rapid transformation, this is no standard drop-you-like-a-sack-of-spuds fay-cay. After seven years, Absolute Sanctuary has its schtick down to a fine art. First up, my wellness intake consultation with an Australian naturopath, whose attention to the detail in my intake form – 'bloating after eating, stress,

skin issues' – is frighteningly acute. It's augmented by a bioimpedance analysis reading to gauge body composition and hydration. Since we are (or I am) talking flat abs, I decide to face the fact that I look like an anaconda that's swallowed a whole goat after even a few mouthfuls of porridge or coffee with milk. Don't even mention protein bars and sugar alcohols; so long, seven-year denial. Within seconds, I'm agreeing to six months off gluten and the myriad foods that mimic it and promising to make batches of bone broth to help heal a suspected leaky gut. Artificial sweetener and lactose also have to go, says my counsel, who lists delicious-sounding

gut-friendly dishes at the resort's eatery, The Love Kitchen, where three daily spa cuisine meals and tropical juices and smoothies are included in my package.

Next up, I'm getting a TomTom-style reading of my vertebral positioning during a pre-program postural analysis with Absolute's Pilates expert – an internationally credentialled fitness trainer with encyclopaedic knowledge of musculoskeletal anatomy. Any fitness program that ignores alignment idiosyncrasies undermines its potential, I'm told, as I note a skewiff bone in the small of my back. Who knew? Not only will my personal biomechanics be factored into the personalised







abs and arms classes, but I'll leave with a schedule of moves to keep my body's quirks from becoming problems in later years. If I seem distracted, it's only because I'm eyeing a prime sun lounge by the adjacent pool, which anchors the compound's hilltop configuration and serves as both a quiet reading room and communal gathering spot, depending on what you're into and how long you're staying (Pilates bootcamps run for five or seven days while many detoxers and fitness program takers stay for 10 or more). The thought of ordering a juice mocktail from the open-air bar and plunging in spurs me on for my first reformer class – a mandatory intro session for newbies. While I recently tried and fell in love with reformer Pilates in Melbourne, I wouldn't know my blue spring from my foot bar. Despite their mechanical simplicity, these bedlike contraptions are surprisingly sophisticated, with all manner of resistance, angle and length settings to match a user's target zone and desired effect. The combinations are almost infinite and with just six people in a class, we each get a full personal intro to adjustments to suit our height, posture and goals. By the end of the hour intro, I'm equally excited and scared by how much the next few days with their two

group reformer classes are going to burn – and that's before I add the private reformer session and pick from the a la carte menu of yoga and fitness classes also included in my program. Fortunately I can have my freakout lying down, during the first of three massages included in the five-day package I'm squeezing into three. Fear quickly morphs into a more circumspect attitude: carpe core (and don't spare the cute cropped tee).

Once I'm suitably chilled about, well, the world, it's time to put bootcamp to the ultimate test. Abs are, after all, made in the kitchen, as are deflated gastrointestinal tracts. I'm not sure what I expected, but the Love Kitchen's a la carte menu is refreshingly democratic. Sure there's an emphasis on vego fare and an inventory of haute rabbit food for non-fasting detoxers on the less hardcore modified diet program, but they've also translated plenty of things you'd expect at a regular resort for the wellness set using raw and organic ingredients, superfoods and dairy alternatives – think hotcakes topped with banana, papaya, coconut yoghurt, palm syrup and raisins or a raw coconut yoghurt and fruit bowl for brekkie and fresh local fish steamed in banana leaves with lemongrass and lime leaf served

with a Thai sauce of mashed garlic, chilli, coriander, lime and shallot. While each guest has a brief from their intake assessment – a little voice in my head says, 'no toasted homemade bread or zucchini pancakes for you' – the rest is unbootcamp-esque carte blanche. I do feel slightly guilty eating a piece of date and coconut jungle brownie in front of the British mother and daughter detoxers who shared my ride from the airport, but they insist that they're amply satisfied by their nutrient-dense smoothies. More power to them. I, meanwhile, am like a kid in a gluten- and dairy-free candy store, marvelling at the number of dishes that can be made sans gluten and moo juice and making a mental note to buy the Love Kitchen's cookbook.

The culinary epiphany kickstarts a mental revolution, sending my long-held reservation about blitz-style overhauls on a giant U-turn. It's not as if I don't know half this stuff (yes, I am a health editor, a-hem), yet when it comes to recognising the personal relevance of information – less making time to learn to

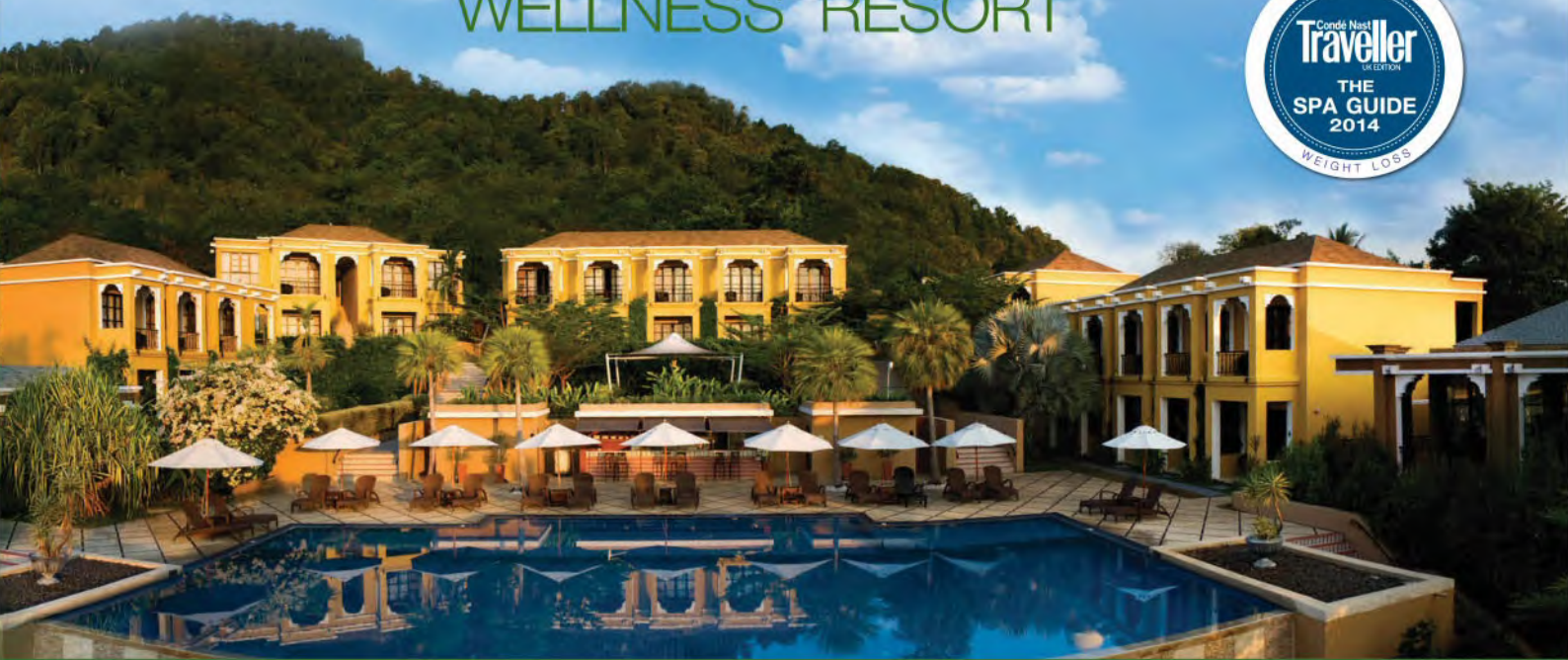
apply it, prepare to apply it and actually apply it in the face of stubborn habits and unforgiving schedules – it's a different kettle of fish. If I force myself to think it through, the changes I'm establishing in three days would quite likely take years and thousands of dollars in 'the real world', where the odds of finding a naturopath, personal trainer and Pilates pro who speak the same lingo are lower than Kanye's pants. The integrated approach is like a lifestyle plan to not only guide my gymming for the long haul, but also correct glitches that impact overall wellness and indeed abs (stress, diet soft drinks, sleepless nights). While the heady exertion load and clean eating schedule inevitably produce the kind of quick results you can stick on your Instagram – #bootcamphottie – the real grunt work starts on home turf, where the old core competes with ironing and watching *The Office* re-runs while knocking back reheated potato gratin in three mouthfuls. Call this transformation training.

After a gentle morning yoga class and swim to start day two,





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I'm back in the poolside Pilates studio and my abs are popping in a way they didn't yesterday. "See them? See what happens when you tuck your ribs?" our instructor cheers. That's another thing that makes core work so infuriatingly tedious – the slightest technique discrepancy and all that hard work you feel like you're doing counts for squat (planker and cruncher beware). I can't discredit the help of a gluten-, dairy- and caffeine-free brekkie in the flat tummy stakes either. In my chaser private class I learn how to tell when my core is disengaged and how to switch it back on – whether I'm doing bicycle crunches, Bosu ball or reformer work. I'm excited to see how quickly my prescribed daily planks make my abs more ripply, especially with a couple of reformer classes a week (Joseph

Pilates famously said that after 10 Pilates classes you'd feel the difference, after 20 you'd see the difference and after 30, you'd have a new body). On that reckoning, 10 days here and you'd be rocking an impressive rig, but Jo's math didn't account for what Absolute Sanctuary calls 'core suspend', which has got to bring the numbers down by at least two classes. Imagine trying to stabilise yourself while dangling mid-air with no firm centre of gravity; your core basically flicks on and off like the lights on a carnival ride as you change positions. Hot tip: book this one a couple of hours clear of food – and any activity demanding lifting anything heavier than a fork, for that matter. I let my muscles regroup while I shoot the breeze with a book on my private balcony before a restorative Thai stretch massage. I hadn't expected my controlling, independent streak to give in so easily, but I've settled into going with the flow and quite like the sense of carelessness, knowing everything's been organised for me. Every one of the guests from the resort's 38 rooms look blissfully chilled and there's

not a hint of the boredom I thought might plague a place perched in a remote island corner (although if you do get cabin fever, it doesn't cost much to take a cab to a nearby beach



town). For me, the intervals between workouts are a welcome chance to practise my new food manifesto, which involves chewing my food until it liquefies to stop wads of protein from putrefying in my gut, which can cause gas and the concomitant food baby phenomenon (TMI?) For a late lunch, I wisely choose the heavenly fragrant chicken in lettuce cups. Gluten free, check. Low carb, check. Protein for muscle repair, Roger that. If your healing ambitions are more Chopra than Victoria's Secret, you can also book appointments with a line-up of visiting wellness consultants practising everything from enneagram to emotional freedom technique (EFT) as well as chiropractic and shiatsu.

By the time I wake up to a spectacular sunrise over the gulf on day three, I'm ridiculously energetic despite having pushed my body harder than I have in years. My middle's as flat as a board and I note that since I arrived, I haven't experienced the uncomfortable gurgly feeling that's come to seem normal after eating. Apparently it's not. While occasional thoughts of Starbucks and my favourite protein bar set off some kind of dopamine alarm (damn reward circuitry), they're easily rerouted with a healthy substitute such as herbal tea or a bite of a banana from the fruit bowl in my room. I bound down to breakfast to sample another exotic cocktail of seeds and fruits before hitting the reformer, unafraid that my tummy will throw a tantrum. Sitting outside in the morning sun, I compare notes with fellow guests –

most of whom are female. The common theme is that everyone is somehow surprised by what they've been able to do here, whether giving up grog for five days, fasting or withstanding two or more workouts a day (that would be me). While it's not the real world, it provides empowering evidence for what's possible with the right support and know-how. Between arms and abs, a token butt and thighs session, my exit consultation and final massage, I compile a post-retreat action plan. One, a digital file of gluten- and dairy-free recipes that can be prepared in under 10 minutes and a separate file of snack options (going for the 'R' in SMART goals). Two, download the enrolment form for reformer Pilates five minutes from home (I did mention realistic, no?). Three, download a recipe for bone broth. Four, schedule a plank every morning before work, aiming for as much of a minute as I can handle. At my exit consult, I'm given a bevy of simple exercises that will strengthen my core, optimise my posture and generally make movement easier. The abdominal covetousness of two days earlier is buried in the innumerable benefits of eating and moving in a way that works for my body, but I'm assured that ripples will be a fringe benefit – as long as I remember to tuck my ribs, chew well, order soy milk and plank. To butcher a quote from the Dalai Lama, "With realisation of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world (and core)." Look out for my crop top selfie, #courtesyofPilatesbootcamp. ■

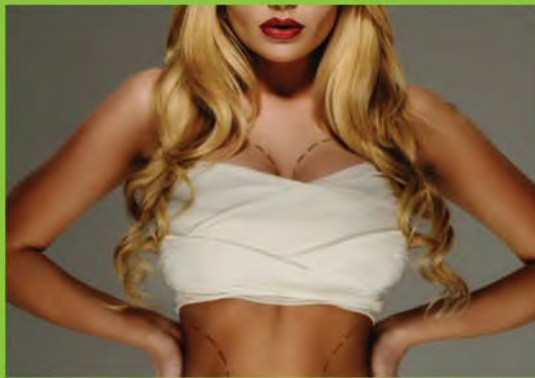






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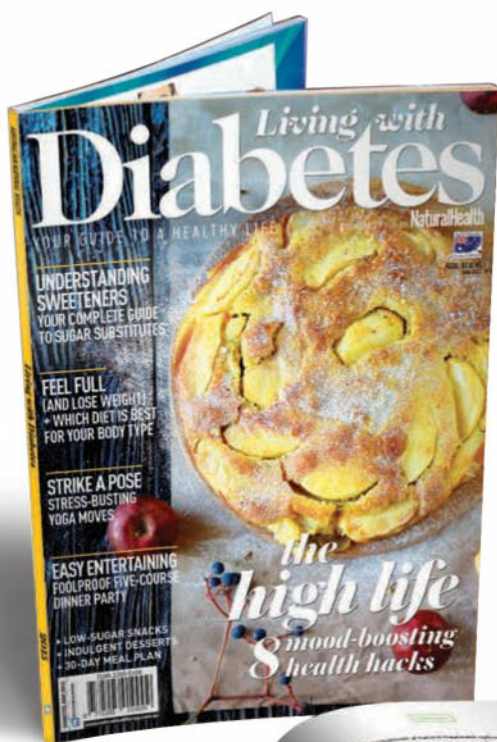


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# *Living with* **Diabetes**

## **Your Guide to a Healthy Life**



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YOUR BEST  
FUEL IT

# How to lose 2,5 OR

## 10 KG

If weight loss is among your post-winter goals, avoid rebound fat gain with our go-to experts' slim-down tips.

Words: Linda Smith

“

SMALL, ACHIEVABLE  
GOALS ARE MUCH  
MORE INSPIRING...

”





Yes, we've heard it before. A million times. Fad diets are bad. Bad, bad, BAD! Ignore the super-fast celebrity slim-downs, experts warn. Avoid the latest weight-loss crazes at all costs. Do NOT skip meals, do NOT exclude entire food groups, do NOT pass go and collect \$200...

If you've read the story on p. 36, you'll have surrendered that wish to slide into stretch skinnies and heartily embraced your adorable love handles.

It's all good in theory – especially as there's

plenty of evidence to show that most dieters end up heavier than when they started. But what if you either need to lose weight for health reasons or damn well want to?

Good news: it IS actually possible to shed the kilos – whether two, five, 10 kg or more – without resorting to starvation, deprivation or punishing gym schedules. The caveat is that each target increment demands a slightly different approach.

Follow the advice of our experts and you'll be shrugging off that [insert goal here] in next to no time.

“DON'T TRY TO CHANGE EVERYTHING AT ONCE, BUT WORK OUT WHICH THINGS WILL HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT.”

### Step 1 – Ditch the diets

“Basically, any diet will help you to lose weight in the short term – the problem is very few of them work long term,” says practising dietitian and nutritionist Dr Joanna McMillan ([joannamcmillan.com.au](http://joannamcmillan.com.au)).

“We return to our old habits and inevitably the weight returns, with interest.”

So, instead of quick-fix Hollywood-inspired meal-replacement plans and juice detoxes, take a long-term view.

“You must make permanent changes to your diet, your activity levels and other lifestyle factors,” Dr McMillan says.

“Then you will get long-term changes. I consider diet, activity levels, sleep, stress management, sedentary behaviours and having joy in your life all equally important for good weight management and optimal health and wellbeing.

“Don't try to change everything at once, but work out which things will have the greatest impact. For some it might be cutting back on takeout food, for others soft drinks, for others portion size.”

### Step 2 – Create your perfect eating plan

Health and fitness coach Amelia Burton ([ameliaburton.com.au](http://ameliaburton.com.au)) recommends learning what constitutes a standard meal

of 8700 kJ and taking a balanced approach to food.

“Any diet that eliminates whole food groups such as dairy, gluten, or carbohydrates (unless you have a proven allergy/intolerance) should be avoided,” she says.

“They are not sustainable, and even if you do lose weight initially, as soon as you return to your old way of eating, you will pile back on the kilos and often more.”

As a general rule, she says, one quarter of your (average-sized, not super-sized) plate should contain a protein-based food, one quarter should contain low-GI carbs, and half your plate should brim with salad or vegetables.

Meanwhile, Adelaide-based dietitian Tanya Lewis, who runs Life Personal Trainers ([lifept.com.au](http://lifept.com.au)), suggests researching the basic principles of popular diets then adopting the best bits of each to create your own ideal eating plan.

“All positive eating habits minimise processed foods and added sugars, and they all include plenty of vegetables,” she says.

“I challenge readers to look carefully at their own habits



and choose one thing each month to change towards better health – whether it be to eat less processed foods or eat more vegetables...let that healthy weight be a healthy bonus!”

### Step 3 – Pick a realistic goal weight

How much should you aim to lose is the 64-gazillion dollar question. If you choose an unrealistic number, you'll probably feel as if you've failed in your weight loss attempt, so rather than choosing digits at random, grab the measuring tape and do some calculations.

“The first thing to say is that if you are very overweight, success should not be judged on meeting some idealistic goal weight,” Dr McMillan says.

“By losing only seven per cent of your body weight, you dramatically reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and

other chronic diseases associated with being overweight.

“Small, achievable goals are much more inspiring. Once you get there, you can always make another, but setting the bar too high often ends up being demoralising.”

She suggests using measurements to monitor progress and setting goals other than weight.

“Ideal weight ranges use BMI and that has inherent problems,” the Sydney based expert explains.

“It doesn't assess how much muscle and body fat you have.

“A better measure is your waist measurement. Low risk for women is a waist less than 80 cm, and they are at substantial risk if over 88 cm. For men, those cut-offs are 94 cm and 102 cm.”

Also consider why you want to lose weight. And do you actually need to? Those last two or three kilos may never fall off

if you are already at the right weight for your body. Maybe you have plateaued for a reason.

"A good way to determine this is to shift your mindset from weight to health," Lewis says.

"Examine your habits and make personal and permanent changes to what and why you eat for reasons of health and let weight loss happen if it's right for you – how liberating!"

### Step 4 – Be patient and aim for slow and steady progress

The more weight you carry, the quicker it will come off. Someone who is aiming to lose 10-plus kilos can expect a greater weekly weight loss than someone struggling to lose the last two. Burton warns against trying to lose too much weight too quickly.

"If you weigh under 100 kg, aim for 0.5 kg per week," the Sydney-based trainer says.

"If you weigh between 100 and 150 kg, then one kg per week is achievable, and if over 150 kg, then two kg per week is healthy."

And while the default human setting is to want the reward, like, yesterday, practise releasing the sense of urgency; not only will it make progress seem quicker, but it will insure against rebound weight gain. "Rapid weight loss never works long term. If you're losing more than the recommended weekly amount, it's not extra fat you're losing, but usually water and sometimes muscle wastage," says Burton.

Clinical psychologist Louise Adams agrees that a sustainable long-term plan is critical to achieving good health and happiness. Set yourself strict and often unrealistic food and exercise goals in the short term and you're doomed to feel like a failure.

"Psychologically, the main thing that happens when we diet is we feel deprived – suddenly there are a lot of rules about what we can and can't eat and how much we can eat," says the Sydney-based practitioner, who specialises in health and wellness and runs the Treat Yourself Well program ([treatyourselfwell.com.au](http://treatyourselfwell.com.au)).

Our minds and bodies are cranked into overdrive at the onset of any weight loss regime, making us feel hungrier and emotionally sensitive.

Throwing out all the junk food in the house and telling ourselves over and over that sugar is the devil will actually make us crave the sweet stuff more.

Instead, Adams suggests putting more focus on the process of wellness rather than aiming for a specific goal weight or a punishing gym routine

– switch from being a slave to food and exercise and instead make an attempt to eat more mindfully, she says, and you'll ultimately feel a lot more empowered in your quest for good health.

### Step 5 – Find an activity you love

Do you long for more relaxation in your life? Then perhaps you're better suited to yoga over a high-impact kickboxing class. Your health and happiness shouldn't be quantified by the number of hours you clock up on the treadmill. Find an activity you love – join a soccer or netball team, try karate or Barre fitness, enlist in a pole dancing course or start a weekly walking group with friends – and exercise will no longer feel like a chore.

Adams suggests if you're serious about losing weight, then sit down and really think about your core values – the things that are most important to you in life – and look at small steps you can take to live in line with these values.

If you like nature, find ways to add bushwalking or rockclimbing to your weekly workout schedule. If you're a stress-head, aim your pent-up anger squarely at a boxing bag.

Also consider investing in a fitness tracker – record your steps, count your kilojoules, analyse your sleep patterns and synch the info to your smartphone in a bid to bolster your personal activity.

### Step 6 – Banish excuses

Regardless of the exercise you choose, make sure you actually get off your butt and do some.

"Although they say [losing weight] is 80 per cent diet and 20 per cent exercise, the relationship between diet and exercise is the real clincher," Burton says.

"More and more studies are showing that people metabolise food better when they exercise regularly. Their blood sugar levels are more even, their metabolisms stay spiked, and they tend to make healthier food choices."

Lewis adds: "Evidence suggests that if you exercise with fun in mind, you compensate less with high energy foods than when exercising with weight loss in mind."

### Step 7 – Slide on those skinny jeans, with no muffin top in sight

Do a twirl in the mirror, give yourself a high five and say hello to your new, improved self. Revel in how great you look and feel now that you've reached your goal. Go YOU!

Reaching your goal

HOW TO LOSE... 10KG

Striking the perfect balance between food and exercise is the key to success.

"For 10 kg or over, the most important thing is learning correct portion sizes, or calories in versus calories out," Burton says.

"The majority of us with over 10 kg to lose have the most common issue of overeating. Get that in check and the weight will come off easily."

And don't think that just because you've been to the gym you can stuff your face with Mars Bars and Doritos.

"Exercise will benefit your health and long term it has an essential role in weight management," Dr McMillan says.

"However, if all you do is take up exercise, it may not have a dramatic effect on your weight."

"This is, in part, because you may build some muscle and lose some fat – and not therefore see the difference on the scales. But also because many people fall into the trap of what I call gym reward syndrome: 'I can have a muffin with my coffee because I worked out'."

"It takes roughly an hour to work off 2000 kJ but you can eat that amount in only a couple of minutes."

"Combine exercise with a healthy eating plan...the bottom line is you need to get your kJ intake down below what you burn daily in order to lose weight."





## COMMON SABOTEURS TO LOSING THE LAST FEW KILOS

### HOW TO LOSE... 5 KG

"Once we're down to the last five to two kilos, we've got to be more like a sniper with the ratios of the foods we eat," Burton says.

"Whilst it's still super important not to overeat, the types of food we eat become important.

"And this can vary from person to person.

"Common foods to keep to a minimum are simple carbs such as white pasta and rice, although complex carbs like whole wheat pasta and dark grainy bread are fine.

"Keep sugar down, as well as high fat or processed foods. Increase lean protein in your diet, which will keep you fuller for longer.

"And this is where exercise plays an important role. It's very hard to lose that last five kg without much exercise. Plus, your super-lean body won't look nearly as hot without beautifully sculpted muscles."

### HOW TO LOSE... 2 KG

Finetune your eating and exercise program, but don't be impatient.

If you weigh under 100 kg, it's not safe or realistic to try losing more than 0.5 kg per week.

Avoid diets that promise you'll 'lose 2 kg fast' and take a more sensible approach.

"Lose weight fast and regain it faster," Dr McMillan says of fad diets that promise overnight success.

"Starve yourself regularly and you are just likely to teach your body to cope with those famine periods and get better at storing energy when you do eat.

"Also, we need nutrients for optimal wellbeing – if you don't eat, you also lack the nutrients and plant chemicals we need to look and feel our best."

- **LIQUID ENERGY** – less filling and easy to over-consume. Smoothies and juices may seem like healthy options, but can be packed with sugar and kilojoules. Cut back on sweetened beverages. Think carefully about long-term alcohol habits and drink less.
- **PORTION SIZE** – eat slowly and use smaller plates.
- **MINDLESS EATING** – we live in a culture of plenty, and food is easily available. Keep snacks out of sight to avoid temptation and overeating.
- **FILL UP ON PROTEIN** – inadequate fibre and/or protein can lead to overeating. Both these nutrients are filling and should be included at every meal. Protein is important also for maintenance of muscle mass.

### TIPS FOR STAYING ON TRACK

- **THINK ABOUT YOUR CORE VALUES AND WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE.** What brings you happiness? Perhaps you rank health as a high priority and want to feel good and have more energy? Now look at small steps you can take to live in line with these values.
- **FIND SOMETHING THAT SUITS YOU.** Hate the gym? Then don't force yourself to go. Instead find something you enjoy (maybe yoga, bushwalking, pole dancing or underwater hockey is more your style?). If you indulge in fitness pursuits that you value and enjoy, you will be happier and more motivated.
- **BE OPEN TO CHANGE.** Just because running half marathons worked for you five years ago, doesn't mean that running is still the best option for you now. Listen to the needs of your body and switch to a new fitness routine if necessary.
- **HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.** If you weigh under 100 kg then it's not safe or realistic to try losing more than 0.5 kg per week. If you weigh between 100 to 150kg, then one kg per week is achievable, and if over 150 kg, then two kg per week is considered healthy.
- **TRY TO EAT EVERY THREE HOURS.** Three main meals per day with two small snacks. When possible, exercise before breakfast on an empty stomach, and then eat breakfast within an hour of exercising. Be aware that when starting or changing an exercise regime that you don't eat more. Your body will naturally crave more food initially but after a few days your appetite will settle down. ■

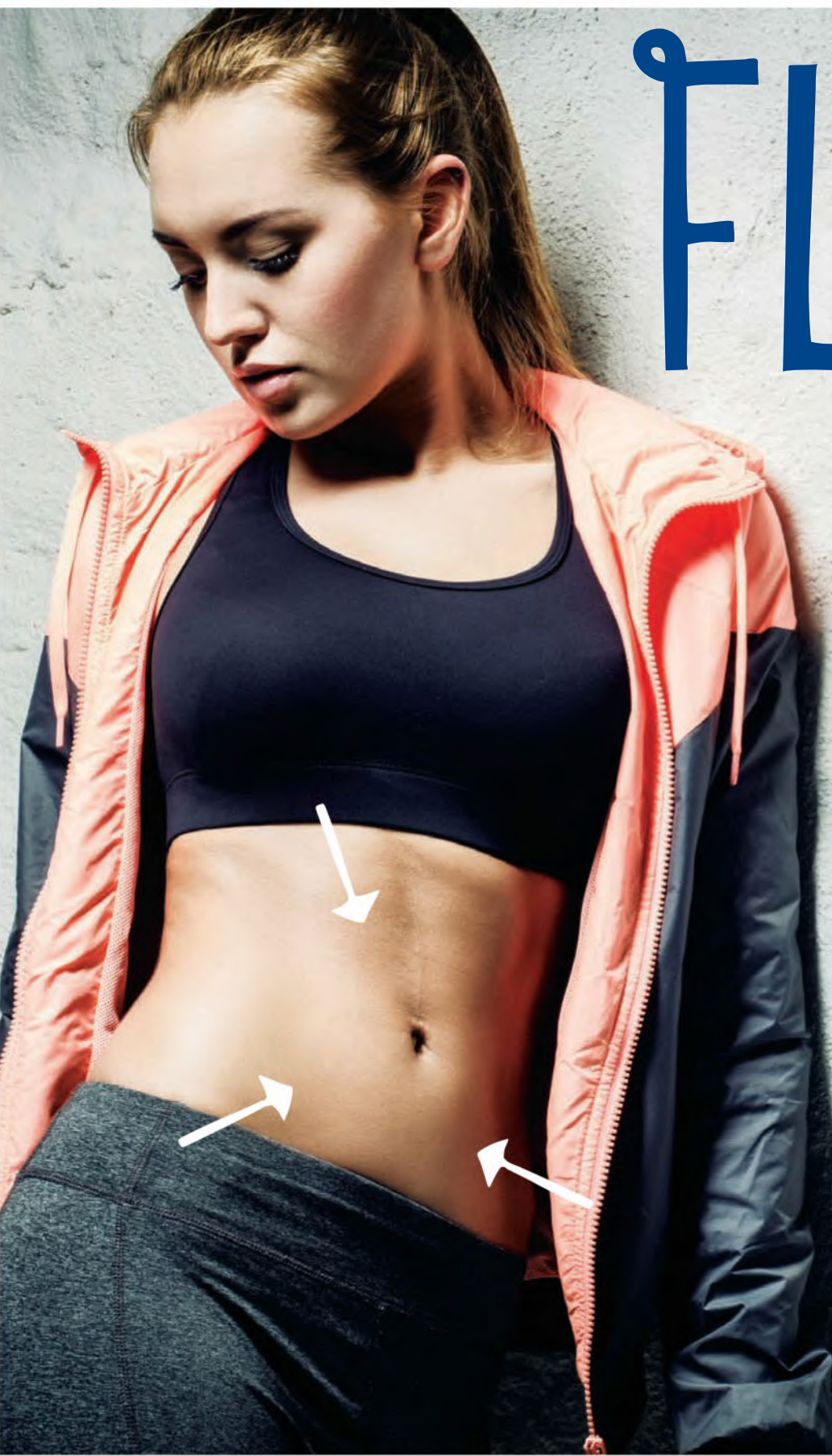




# FLAT Chat

All the crunches in China won't give you washboard abs if you're bloated. Before you embark on a hardcore diet or stuff yourself into a girdle, try quitting these stomach saboteurs.

Words: David Goding





If your stomach starts out flat in the morning and gradually expands like a party balloon as the day draws on, it could be trying to tell you something. More than merely annoying – and possibly embarrassing – digestive issues are signs that your gut's miffed at something you've done. As in, 'Really dude, did ya need that Diet Coke?'

"Very few of us realise what strange wet miracles of science operate inside us after every meal," says Mary Roach, author of *Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*.

Heartburn, cramps, nausea, diarrhoea and constipation are just a few languages your gut can use to convey its unrest according to gastroenterologist and co-author of the *Mayo Clinic on Digestive Health* Dr John King.

#### THE SYMPTOM: Slow digestion THE CAUSE: Fats and oils



Fat isn't the problem, but consuming fat without fibre is a recipe for bloating. "Fibre helps food pass smoothly through your digestive tract; fat does the opposite," says Dr King. "It slows digestion. Otherwise the fat will be much like an oil spill. Unlike proteins and carbs, which feel at home in the aqueous environs of the gastrointestinal tract, fats are not very compatible with water at all. They rise to the top and float on the contents of your stomach, and are digested last. The result? Bloating, says Dr King. "Fat delays stomach emptying and can increase the sensation of fullness." For optimal gut health, fat should comprise no more than 10 per cent of calories in a meal or snack, says Dr David Klein (digestionperfection.com). Even good fats, when consumed in excess, can bring on tummy issues. Beware coconut oil and avocado, seeds and nuts.



#### THE SYMPTOM: Heartburn/reflux THE CAUSE: Large portions



Against the dictum favouring nutrient density (more food, fewer kJs), it stands to reason that many wholefood devotees are knocking back food in greater volumes than their processed food-loving counterparts. While one could Hoover down 1,500 kJ of corn chips without feeling excessively full, the same quota of raw veg would demand a massive bowl of produce. Mega portions of fatty foods with little or no fibre multiply the damage exponentially. "Eating too much is a



major cause of digestive problems," says Dr Norton Greenberger, author of *4 Weeks to Healthy Digestion*. "Increased pressure on your stomach forces stomach acid back into your oesophagus, causing a burning sensation in your oesophagus (heartburn) and inflammation of tissues that line the oesophagus (oesophagitis)." If this two-way food transit becomes your gut's default, the damage caused to the barrier between the stomach and oesophagus can result in chronic condition of GERD – gastroesophageal reflux disease.

#### THE SYMPTOM: Gas THE CAUSE: Soft drink



Even low-joule soft drinks and carbonated H<sub>2</sub>O can cause dyspepsia – a.k.a. indigestion. Next time ask for tap and sip it during meals to dilute material entering your bowel, for easier digestion. As a fringe anti-benefit, caffeine-loaded fizzy drinks also act as diuretics, sucking water out of your body. Without enough water the contents of your digestive tract become stodgy, making it much harder to move along. The caveat doesn't apply to carbonated water. In an Italian study, researchers compared the effects of carbonated water and tap water in 21 people suffering dyspepsia and constipation and found that after two weeks, symptoms of dyspepsia and constipation had dropped in the sparkling group but not in the tap group. The carbonated H<sub>2</sub>O appeared to ease indigestion and feelings of fullness after eating a small amount of food. Other gas culprits include drinking through a straw, talking while eating, eating and drinking quickly and chewing gym, which all invite more air into your GI tract.



#### THE SYMPTOM: Diarrhoea THE CAUSE: Caffeine



A well-known diuretic, caffeine is also known to disrupt gut activity. "In your kidneys, it increases the flow of urine. In your colon, it acts as a laxative," says Jennifer Ackerman, author of *Sex Sleep Eat Drink Dream: A Day in the Life of Your Body*. Caffeine and other phytochemicals relax and stimulate muscles in the rectosigmoid colon. Researchers also think there may be a gastrocolonic response from stomach or small intestine receptors, which in turn triggers the colon. Limit coffees to fewer than five a day and minimise caffeine from other sources. Large quantities of caffeine may also irritate the digestive tract and bind with the minerals in food and drink, hindering nutrient absorption.

**THE SYMPTOM:** General discomfort  
**THE CAUSE:** Imbalance



An imbalance between good and bad bacteria can throw your digestive system off course.

"There's evidence that probiotics can reduce symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and the duration of diarrhoea in acute infectious diarrhoea," says accredited practising dietitian Pip Golley. Some yoghurts and fermented milk drinks can supply probiotics as do probiotic supplements, which are especially recommended after a course of antibiotics, which wipes out good gut bacteria. "If you have had a major infection or have been treated with antibiotics, you may benefit from a more direct way of 're-inoculating' your digestive tract by taking a probiotic supplement," says Patrick Holford, nutritionist and author of *Improve your Digestion: A Drug-Free Guide to Achieving a Healthy Digestive System*.

## Washboard menu

| OFF THE MENU  | ON THE MENU  | POINT BEING...   |
|---|--|--|
| Cow's milk (lactose)                                  | Low-fat soy milk                                       | Low-fat soy milk is the closest alternative in protein content for those with lactose intolerance. |
| Pasta/noodles (gluten)                                | Buckwheat/soba noodles                                 | Low-GI carbohydrate swap for those with gluten sensitivities.                                      |
| Oats/porridge (gluten)                                | Quinoa porridge  | High-protein, gluten free carbohydrate swap for those with coeliac disease.                        |
| Other wheat products (gluten)<br>Breads/cereals/pasta | Quinoa, brown rice, chickpeas, corn, buckwheat noodles | Low-GI carbohydrate alternatives for those that need to avoid gluten.                              |
| Black coffee  | Tea: peppermint, camomile ginger and lemon             | Tea is gentler on the stomach and peppermint tea is reportedly helpful for those with IBS.         |
| Deep fried chicken                                    | Poached chicken breast                                 | Less fat to slow digestion.  |
| Soft drink  | Water/carbonated water                                 | Lower in kJs, hydrating  |
| Apples  | Strawberries   | For those with sensitivities to fructose, (FODMAPS) strawberries are lower in fructose to apples.  |

## FOOD BABY REDUX

If you're shrugging off questions about when you're due or getting around in tent tops to hide a food baby, take our flat tummy task force's menu advice.

**THE DIETITIAN**  
Dr Joanna McMillan

### FOOD CULPRITS:

Dairy products, breads and cereals, fried/fatty foods, coffee, spicy foods and artificial sweeteners.

**THE SCIENCE:** Lactose (intolerance means lacking the enzyme needed to digest lactose), gluten (damages the intestinal lining in people with coeliac disease), and coffee, spicy foods and artificial sweeteners are common gut irritants in people with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). FODMAPS, which are short chain carbs, are poorly digested by some people and may lead to gastrointestinal upsets such as bloating and diarrhoea.

**THE FIX:** Get tested for lactose intolerance, gluten intolerance, coeliac disease and FODMAPS. Swapping for alternative products is not always a healthier option. Many milk alternatives (e.g. rice milk) have a high-GI and low-protein content and gluten-free products can also have a much higher GI than the wholegrain versions. Avoid these foods as required, but see an accredited practising dietitian to help you meet your nutritional requirements in the healthiest way.

**THE NATUROPATH**  
Teresa Mitchell-Paterson

**FOOD CULPRITS:** High-fibre diets can cause tummy distension. It is wise to increase fibre into the diet slowly by about five grams a day (until you reach the recommended 25 grams a day) and ensure you drink plenty of water. Food intolerances and allergies can also cause bloating; common food intolerances are wheat, gluten, milk solids, fruit sugars, corn and soy.

**THE SCIENCE:** Fibre can ferment in the gut if there is inadequate 'good bacteria' such as those found in probiotics. The fermentation process causes gas and eventually stomach distension. Intolerances and allergies cause the gut to react and often the reaction is seen as a swollen tummy almost immediately after eating the reactive food.

**THE FIX:** Write a food diary and note when the swelling occurs. This will assist a qualified health practitioner to find out what the food culprit is. Sometimes it can be a delayed reaction – up to two to three days later, it is best to speak with a health care professional to do the detective work. ■



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# PERSONAL SPRING CLEAN PRETOX

LIGHTEN UP  
YOUR WAY

Feeling heavy and sluggish after a couch-centric winter? Reboot your body with these decidedly indulgent meal plans from our go-to diet experts.

Words: Stephanie Osfield

**S**o you're emerging from hibernation and planning to spring-clean your diet. But with extremes of any sorts now seriously out of dietetic vogue and detoxes on notice for their spurious claims, how can you restore lightness and energy without confining yourself to kale and dandelion tea?

We asked a leading dietitian, nutritionist and naturopath to provide spring meal plans that nod to weight regulation and wellbeing. With variety, food quality and taste in mind, our experts have devised sample

one-day meal and snack suggestions to satisfy your taste buds and nutrient needs on both weekdays and weekends. In their current guise, they encourage sustained weight loss of between half to one kilo a week without making you feel deprived. If you just want to feel lighter and more vital, an extra meal or two extra snacks will keep your weight stable while optimising your body's systems. Follow one of the plans or give all three a go to decide which one best suits your lifestyle and health goals. See you at lunch.

## DIETITIAN'S Meal Plan

WH&F dietitian on call Melanie McGrice is director of Nutrition Plus clinics in Melbourne. She has a special interest in weight management, and has authored *The Pregnancy Weight Plan* (Pan Macmillan, \$29.99). As an active board member of the Dietitians Association of Australia, she has a passion for educating people about how to eat well, maintain a healthy lifestyle and still appreciate and enjoy good food. She does this through private consultation and her Nutrition & Wellbeing website and blog [melaniemcgrice.com.au](http://melaniemcgrice.com.au)





### McGrice's Top Weight Management Tips:

**1 Weigh Your Portions:** Do this for a day or two to get an idea of serving sizes, then weigh portions on several days every few months to ensure they are not creeping up.

**2 Avoid liquid kilojoules** from alcohol and juices. These can affect weight and weight loss by causing a rise in blood sugar levels and insulin. They add 'empty' kilojoules, which offer little of nutritional value.

**3 Eat slowly and savour your meals** to optimise your satiety. Imagine you are writing a food review and focus on the flavour, texture and taste of the food.

**4 Get adequate sleep:** When you don't sleep enough your appetite hormones can change so that you feel hungrier. You may also experience cravings, as your body is low on energy.

**5 Engage in strength exercises** at least twice a week to optimise your muscle mass and increase your metabolic rate.

## DIETITIAN'S Recipes



### Raw vegetable salad with dressing

Serves 1

#### Ingredients

Salad:

- ½ cup each of grated beetroot and carrot
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves
- A little chopped parsley
- 1 small 95 g tin of tuna (drained).

Dressing:

- 1 tsp each of lemon zest, lemon juice, seeded mustard and olive oil

#### Method

Combine together grated beetroot and carrot, baby spinach leaves, chopped parsley and tuna. Add dressing and toss.

### Warm pasta salad

Serves 1

#### Ingredients

Salad:

- ½ cup roasted cauliflower
- ½ cup blanched peas
- 1 small 95 g tin of salmon
- ½ cup cooked wholemeal pasta

Dressing:

- 100 g fat-free natural yoghurt
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1–2 tsp dijon mustard
- Chopped dill

#### Method

Combine roasted cauliflower, blanched peas, salmon and cooked wholemeal pasta. Whisk together dressing ingredients and toss through salad.

|               | WEEKDAY  | WEEKEND   |
|---------------|--|---|
| Breakfast     | ▶ ¼ cup (30 g) rolled oats topped with slices of half a medium banana, ½ cup low-fat milk and 150 g fat-free natural yoghurt<br>▶ Glass of water | ▶ One slice of wholegrain toast topped with a poached egg and a side of 5 lightly blanched asparagus spears.<br>▶ Cup of reduced fat milk |
| Morning Tea   | ▶ One wholegrain wrap (40 g), spread with 60 g low-fat ricotta, slices of the remaining half of a banana and a sprinkling of ground cinnamon     | ▶ One small grapefruit  |
| Lunch         | ▶ Raw vegie salad with small tin of tuna (see recipe)<br>▶ Glass of water, herb tea or black tea with reduced fat milk                           | ▶ Warm pasta salad (see recipe)<br>▶ Glass of water, herb tea or black tea with reduced fat milk  |
| Afternoon Tea | ▶ One nashi pear   | ▶ 3 crispbreads (35 g) with 60 g reduced fat ricotta  |
| Dinner        | ▶ Pasta with herbed chicken and spring vegetables (see recipe)   | ▶ Marinated pan-fried lamb cutlets served with herbs, spices and vegetables (see recipe)  |
| Supper        | ▶ 150 g fat-free natural yogurt with a sprinkling of ground cinnamon<br>▶ Glass of water or herb tea   | ▶ 1 cup (150 g) red papaya with 100 g fat free natural yoghurt  |

### Pasta with herbed chicken and spring vegetables

Serves 1

#### Ingredients

- 150 g sliced chicken breast
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Fresh thyme to taste
- Cracked black pepper to taste
- One small clove of diced garlic
- ½ cup each of sliced zucchini, mushroom and asparagus
- ½ cup of cooked wholemeal pasta
- Grated lemon zest

#### Method

1. Brown the chicken breast in a frypan with olive oil, fresh thyme and cracked black pepper. Set aside.
2. Gently fry diced garlic and sliced zucchini, mushroom and asparagus.
3. In a separate pot, prepare wholemeal pasta.
4. Add chicken back to pan with some of the pasta water until cooked. Toss pasta with vegetables and stir through grated lemon zest and a little more thyme and cracked black pepper.

### Marinated pan-fried lamb and vegetables

Serves 1

#### Ingredients

- 2 pan-fried trimmed lamb cutlets, marinated
- 1 cup braised lettuce with peas and sliced spring onion
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- Cracked black pepper to taste

Marinade:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- Fresh rosemary

#### Method

1. Marinate lamb cutlets overnight or for several hours in olive oil, grated lemon zest and fresh rosemary.
2. Brown lamb in a frypan. Set aside on plate.
3. Gently braise the lettuce and serve alongside lamb, topped with peas, spring onion, a dash of lemon juice and cracked pepper.

## NUTRITIONIST'S Meal Plan

Aloysa Hourigan is Senior Nutritionist and Program Manager for Nutrition Australia Queensland. She also works as a dietitian in private practice. Her special interests are in preventing chronic disease and promoting lifestyle change. She has been involved in obesity working groups and authored children's nutrition books, including *I'm Having a Rainbow for Dinner* (NAO Nutrition, \$14). [nutritionaustralia.org](http://nutritionaustralia.org)

|                      | WEEKDAY  | WEEKEND  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Breakfast</b>     | ► Bircher muesli topped with chopped ½ mango or banana (see recipe)  | ► Mushroom omelette (2 eggs used cooked with only 1 tsp oil, see recipe) + grilled tomato + 1 slice wholegrain toast + slice melon   |
| <b>Morning Tea</b>   | ► 2 wholegrain crackers with 1 tbsp low-fat cheese spread, topped with slice of tomato/beetroot/gherkin  | ► 1 serve fresh fruit  |
| <b>Lunch</b>         | ► Wholegrain bread roll (80 g), thinly spread with ¼ avocado and filled with 60 g canned salmon, ¼ small red onion (finely sliced), 1 tbsp grated carrot, rocket or lettuce leaves, topped with 1 tsp sweet chilli sauce<br>► + cup of tea with reduced fat milk or 200 ml glass of reduced fat milk | ► Pita Pizza: 1 small pita bread spread with a little tomato paste/pizza sauce, topped with 60 g chopped chicken, tomato, baby spinach, sliced raw mushrooms, and grated cheese and then grilled |
| <b>Afternoon Tea</b> | ► 20 g almonds   | ► 200 g low-fat yoghurt  |
| <b>Dinner</b>        | ► Chick pea curry and ⅔ cup cooked brown rice (see recipe)   | ► Cumin fish and balsamic bean salad (see recipe)  |
| <b>Supper</b>        | ► ½ cup berries + ½ cup (100 g) reduced fat vanilla yoghurt  | ► Citrus fruit salad (see recipe)  |

## NUTRITIONIST'S Recipes

Bircher muesli  
Serves 2

## Ingredients

- 1 apple or 1 pear (150 g), peeled, cored and grated
- ⅔ cup rolled oats
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 125 ml pear juice
- 20 g toasted flaked almonds or other raw nuts
- 75 g reduced fat vanilla yoghurt
- 125 ml reduced fat milk

Top with fresh fruit:

- E.g. ½ mango, peeled and chopped or 1 small banana, sliced
- + 1 passionfruit (optional)

## Method

1. Place the apple/pear, rolled oats, cinnamon and pear juice in a bowl and mix to combine. Allow to stand covered in the refrigerator for an hour or overnight.
2. Fold through the almonds and yoghurt.
3. Spoon muesli into individual bowls and serve topped with milk, mango/banana, then, if desired, drizzle with passionfruit pulp.

## Aloysa's Top Weight Management Tips:

**1 Steer clear of rigid diets:** They can cause nutritional deficiencies and are unsustainable because they are repetitive and socially isolating.

**2 Avoid 'all or nothing' thinking about food,** where you indulge in one biscuit and feel guilty, then throw in the towel and eat the whole packet.

**3 Don't cut out carbs:** This may lead you to feel hungry and become constipated (from lack of fibre). If you then fill up on meat to quell the hunger, you increase intake of saturated fats, linked to heart disease and bowel cancer.

Choose carbs that are low glycaemic index (GI), such as stoneground rye bread and basmati rice as they keep you feeling full for longer and give you a slow, sustained release of energy.

**4 Brown-bag your lunch:** The five or 10 minutes of time it takes will pay dividends, ensuring you eat healthier, filling, lower kilojoule food that increases your intake of nutrients.

**5 Stop eating in front of screens** or while rushing or standing as you will not fully enjoy your food and will feel less satisfied after a meal.



## Mushroom omelette

Serves 2

### Ingredients

- 4 eggs (2 eggs per person)
- 1–2 tbsp water
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Cooking oil spray
- 100 g mushrooms, sliced
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley

### Method

1. Break eggs into small bowl and whisk together with one tablespoon of water. Season with pepper.
2. Heat small frying pan to medium heat, spray lightly with cooking oil spray and cook mushrooms until soft. Remove from pan and set aside and cover lightly with foil to keep

mushrooms warm.

3. If necessary, spray a little more oil in pan and when pan is again at medium heat, add whisked eggs and allow to cook until omelette is almost set.
4. Place cooked mushrooms and chopped parsley in the centre of the omelette and fold the sides of the omelette over to enclose the filling.
5. Serve immediately with wholegrain toast and grilled/freshly sliced tomato.

**Tip:** Replace mushrooms with other vegetables such as thinly sliced onion with grated zucchini or baby spinach leaves; or chopped tomato and onion lightly cooked.

## Chickpea curry

Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 brown onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 long green chillies, finely chopped
- ½ tsp dried turmeric
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 2 potatoes, cut into large cubes
- 2 carrots, cut into thick slices
- 2 zucchini, cut into thick slices
- 425 g can salt-reduced chopped tomatoes
- 250 ml reduced salt vegetable stock
- 400 g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves, washed
- 1 cup frozen peas

### Method:

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan, add onion and ginger and cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes or until soft. Add garlic, chillies and spices and cook for 2 minutes or until fragrant.
2. Add potatoes and carrots and cook until vegetables are coated in the spices. Stir in zucchini, tomatoes and stock and simmer. Reduce heat and cook uncovered for 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender and curry has thickened slightly. Add chickpeas and stir.
3. Add peas and spinach; cook until spinach just wilts and chickpeas are soft. Serve curry with cooked brown rice.

## Citrus fruit salad

Serves 4

### Ingredients

- 200 ml fresh orange juice
- 2 tbsp raisins
- 1 tbsp brandy (optional)
- 2 tsp honey
- 2 segmented oranges
- 2 segmented mandarins
- 100g fat-reduced Greek yoghurt
- ¼ cup pecans, roughly chopped

### Method

1. Combine orange juice, raisins, brandy and honey in a bowl. Fold through orange and mandarin segments.
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour.
3. Just prior to serving, dollop on yoghurt and garnish with pecan nuts.

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## NATUROPATH'S Meal Plan

Cassie Mendoza-Jones is a naturopath, kinesiologist, nutritionist and practitioner of herbal medicine who consults with women in her Sydney clinic to guide them to achieve 'body harmony' – a state of balance, ease and vitality. She has devised a range of e-books, recipes and meal plans, including options that are gluten free, paleo, vegetarian or designed to balance hormones or assist weight loss. They are featured on her blogsite Elevate Vitality: [elevatevitality.com.au](http://elevatevitality.com.au)

### Mendoza-Jones' Top Weight Management Tips:

#### 1 Balance your blood sugar levels.

Avoid 'low sugar' foods, which usually contain artificial sweeteners that hinder stable blood sugar levels that are critical for maintaining a healthy weight. Also avoid 'low fat' foods, which are usually loaded with sugar, which disrupts many processes in the body, including blood sugar regulation, metabolism, mood, stress, sleep, adrenal and hormonal function.

#### 2 Have an understanding of the energy content of your food intake

but concentrate on eating a balanced, nourished diet rather than obsessively counting kilojoules.

**3 Eat wholefoods** that are as close as possible to their natural state and are unrefined and unprocessed, so they are packed full of nutrients your body needs to repair, survive and thrive.

**4 Reduce caffeine intake** as this interrupts healthy blood sugar levels and increases levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which blocks fat burning.

**5 Schedule a treat meal one night each week.** The key is to keep it to one meal, and not extend it to a treat day or a treat weekend. A treat meal won't affect your progress, but a treat day may stall weight loss and a treat weekend may push your progress back.



|                      | WEEKDAY  | WEEKEND   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| <b>Breakfast</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Natural yoghurt mixed with protein powder, blueberries and 1 tbsp muesli OR</li> <li>▶ 1–2 poached eggs on a roasted field mushroom sprinkled with feta</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 2-egg omelette with garlic, leek, rocket, mushrooms and sprinkling of parmesan OR</li> <li>▶ Almond meal pancakes with blueberries and coconut (see recipe)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Morning Tea</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Chai tea made with milk of choice and stevia OR</li> <li>▶ Green vegie juice (celery, spinach, cucumber, lemon, green apple)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 2 corn thins with 1 tbsp nut butter and cinnamon OR</li> <li>▶ 2 carrot sticks with 2 tbsp hummus</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Lunch</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 1 x mountain bread, 3 slices smoked salmon, ¼ avocado, baby spinach, grated carrot and tomato OR</li> <li>▶ 120 g chicken breast salad with 1 tbsp feta, dressing of apple cider vinegar, lemon juice and flaxseed oil</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Wild Atlantic tinned salmon salad with roast vegetables (see recipe) OR</li> <li>▶ Tuna and avocado salad</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Afternoon Tea</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Apple and green tea with fresh ginger and 2 tbsp almonds</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vegie sticks and hummus or homemade avocado dip</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Dinner</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 130–150 g grass-fed steak with roasted Brussels sprouts, leek, fennel and salad OR</li> <li>▶ 3 lamb cutlets marinated in lots of herbs (mint, parsley, coriander) and salad</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Grilled white fish with steamed vegies drizzled with tahini OR</li> <li>▶ Grilled fish or chicken with spiced chickpea and kale-stuffed capsicum (see recipe)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supper</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Chamomile OR peppermint tea</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Apple berry lasagne with coconut crumble (see recipe) OR</li> <li>▶ 2 squares of dark chocolate</li> </ul>   |



# NATUROPATH'S Recipes

## Wild Atlantic salmon salad

Serves 1

### Ingredients

- 1 tin of wild Alaskan salmon (e.g. John West) in olive oil
- 2 handfuls baby spinach, washed
- 1 carrot, sliced
- ¼ avocado
- 1 tbsp Persian feta
- Leftover roasted vegies like carrot, fennel, onion and sweet potato
- A dressing of olive oil, a dash of balsamic and some apple cider vinegar, plus a little Himalayan sea salt and fresh black pepper

### Method

1. Combine all ingredients.
2. Dress the salad. Enjoy!

## Almond meal pancakes with blueberries and coconut

Serves 2

### Ingredients

- 1 cup almond meal
- 2 eggs (organic, free-range)
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- Pinch of salt (Celtic or Himalayan for added minerals)
- Maple syrup (organic) or rice bran syrup
- ½ punnet blueberries and 2 tbsp shredded or desiccated coconut

### Method

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl except for the coconut oil, blueberries and coconut and mix well. Add maple syrup at this point or just use it to serve at the end.
2. Heat a pan on the stove to low-medium heat and add the oil. Drop spoonfuls of pancake batter onto hot oil and cook like you would usually cook pancakes.
3. Once you see a few bubbles come up through the pancake, add a few blueberries and some coconut to the top of each pancake. Flip over after a couple minutes, or until the underside of the pancake looks golden brown.
4. Serve with a dollop of natural or coconut yoghurt or coconut cream, a sprinkle of cinnamon and a little delicious organic maple syrup.

## Spiced chickpea and kale-stuffed capsicums

6 capsicum serves

### Ingredients

- 6 capsicums, any colour (or one per person)
- 1 tin organic chickpeas, rinsed well
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 tbsp Moroccan spice blend
- Pinch of Himalayan pink salt
- 1 zucchini
- ¼ bunch kale
- Salmon fillets
- Dash of olive oil

### Method

1. Heat oven to 180°C. Cut the tops off the capsicums and de-seed them. Keep their 'lids'.
2. In a bowl, mix together the chickpeas, coconut oil, Moroccan spices and pink salt.
3. Grate the zucchini and lay the strips over the side of the capsicums so they can be folded over before baking. Stuff the bottom of each capsicum with some kale, then fill with 1 to 2 tbsp of the chickpeas.
4. Fold the zucchini ribbons over the top of the chickpeas, put the 'lid' of the capsicum on and bake in the oven for about 20 to 25 minutes or until the capsicums look cooked.
5. Serve capsicums with fish of your choice, grilled or pan fried with olive oil.

**Tip:** Stuff capsicums with quinoa, nuts or seeds as a delicious vegetarian or vegan main meal.

## Apple berry lasagne with coconut crumble

Serves 4

### Ingredients

- 2 Granny Smith apples (pears would also be yum!)
- 8 tbsp almond meal
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 tbsp almond butter or nut butter of choice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Stevia (if desired)
- 1 cup frozen berries
- ½ cup oats or muesli

### Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C, fan-forced with the grill on.
2. Wash apples and slice with a mandolin or finely slice with a knife.
3. Mix together the almond meal, coconut butter or oil, almond butter, cinnamon and optional stevia to form a smooth paste.
4. In ramekins, layer the apple slices, then some of the almond meal paste, then some berries, and keep layering until the ramekin is nearly full, leaving a little bit of the almond meal paste for the topping. (You can also make this in a large baking dish, just double or triple the recipe.)
5. Mix the oats/muesli together with the last of the paste and spoon onto the ramekins.
6. Bake for 15 to 25 minutes or until the apple is cooked through and the top is a crunchy golden brown.
7. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly.
8. Serve as is or with a dollop of natural yoghurt. ■



# TONGUE *Twister*

You know which foods you can't get enough of and which turn your stomach, but exploring the basis for your culinary preferences and mealtime rituals could pave the way to a healthier palate. No willpower required.

Words: Stephanie Osfield and  
Rebecca Long



If your mum made you eat spam sambos, chances are ham isn't on your sandwich wish list (maybe that's why you've had tuna and corn 10 days in a row). Likewise if chocolate was a once-a-year treat, it might have assumed a sort of culinary halo. Yet while memory is often blamed and credited for prejudices held by the palate, there's a world of biology and science behind which foods you find pleasant and which you abhor.

One layer in a mille feuille of biology, chemistry and psychology comprises genes that write a blueprint for flavour preferences according to taste expert Eugeni Roura from the University of Queensland's Centre for Nutrition and Food Sciences. Genes determine taste sensitivity, which materialises as food type preferences, Roura says. "There are many genes that affect taste sensation for chemicals and flavours."

If someone is particularly sensitive to the bitterness in broccoli, it's likely that they are what's known as a 'hypertaster'. About a third of women fit

this type. "Hypertasters have more sensitive taste buds and tend to be fussy eaters and dislike intense flavours," says psychologist Kellee Waters, who specialises in food addiction and obesity. The same sensitivity makes very sweet and spicy flavours extra intense; hypertasters often avoid anything super sweet or spicy along with strong cheeses and foods with visceral textures such as runny eggs, olives and oysters. The aversions native to hypertasting have their perks. Aversions to creamy sauces, strong cheese and complex flavours naturally push them towards less calorie-dense food types and towards nutrient-dense dishes. "Hypertasters have such a strong response to food that they get a robust signalling that switches off their appetite, whereas non-tasters may have to work harder to stop eating because they might not get that big signal to the brain telling them they are full," Roura says.

Conversely, the taste buds of hypotasters are very hard to please. In fact, their catchcry might be 'can't get no

satisfaction'; these diners have a sort of taste numbness and may naturally favour foods with stronger flavours. This taste type also predisposes people to eating larger portions in a bid to extract a flavour or sensation hit in a similar way to food addicts and binge eaters. "Binge eaters, food addicts, yo-yo dieters and people who are obese are often trying to eat to stimulate certain brain responses such as feeling calmer or feeling pleasure," Waters says.

Taste type notwithstanding, the science of flavour perception now figures in studies of appetite and eating motivation, with some studies finding that deliberately boring your taste buds can reduce desire to eat and therefore curb intake. Sensory specialists Janna Smith and Tanya Ditschun have coined the term 'sensory-specific satiety' to describe the decline in satisfaction from one type of food and renewal in appetite that results from exposure to a new flavour. David Katz, author of *The Flavor Point Diet*, cites studies suggesting that exposure to fewer flavours leads to fullness sooner than exposure

to a more diverse, exciting palate. Contrary findings also exist and argue that eating the same limited range of flavours leads to desensitisation, drawing parallels to the perils of hypotasting.

"This can play out in several ways," says Melanie McGrice, spokesperson for the Australian Dietitians Association of Australia. "Although research shows that too much variety in the diet can lead us to overeat, too little variety can also lead us to miss out on a wider range of important vitamins and minerals that boost health. In addition, boredom with your home-cooked evening meal may lead you to order out because you crave something more tasty and varied than the same old recipes you always prepare."

Taste is just the tip of the iceberg in eating habits. Attachments to and overestimating the importance of other aspects of food and eating – think kilojoule count, cleanliness and even emotional reward value – can also cement food rituals. Here's how to flee any food rut and discover a new world of culinary thrills.

**RUT TYPE:**  
*Sweet treats*

**DIRECTIVE:**  
Gradually substitute  
other flavours



Whether you wolf down honey-covered flakes every morning or favour a toast 'n' jam hit mid-arvo after skipping lunch, consuming sweets you feel you need is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Just add diet soft drink to keep your taste buds chasing super-sweet tastes. If you add a simple carb savoury element such as white bread or crackers, it's a double whammy that will raise your blood glucose and insulin levels and result in a cycle of soaring and crashing.

## BREAK THE HABIT

### *Don't:*

- ✗ **Forget the protein:** This will ensure the toast is more filling and will help your brain switch off your hunger hormones. Good options include tuna, salmon, sardines, egg, chicken or cottage cheese.

### *Do:*

- ✓ **Top the bread with vegetables:** If you add slices of avocado and tomato to your toast, their fibre content will fill you up more and you will help meet your daily nutritional requirement of five serves of vegetables.
- ✓ **Try a different carb-based option:** Instead of honey on toast at breakfast, have porridge with a dash of maple syrup or eggs and toast. Instead of jam on toast as a snack, try a stewed apple (or fast-cooked apple slices) topped with yoghurt.

## BREAK THE HABIT

### Don't:

- ✗ **Get bogged down in numbers.** Think of foods that have more fibre and nutrients as being lower in kilojoules than foods that don't.

### Do:

- ✓ **Choose healthy whole foods.** "Choose good quality protein: grass-fed animal products (not factory farmed), organic eggs, chicken, small wild fish, nuts and seeds," says author of *The Blood Sugar Solution* Dr Mark Hyman. "Go for good carbs such as vibrantly coloured vegetables, the brighter the better. Eat fruits like wild berries, apples and kiwis. Add good fats like avocado, extra-virgin olive oil, nuts and seeds and omega-3 fats from fish."

**RUT TYPE:**  
*Counting kJs*

**DIRECTIVE:**  
Back off the control freak pedal

OLD WAY

NEW WAY

### Don't:

- ✗ **Leave meals to chance.** Instead, use weekends to write a weekly menu and shop to suit those meals so that you have all the ingredients you need at home and don't need to hit the supermarket when you're hungry/tired/vulnerable. This will also remove rationalisations for ordering takeaway.
- ✗ **Cook old favourites the same way:** If you're mad for pasta, instead of always serving bolognese, try some crumbled salmon and baked asparagus with a dash of pesto instead. Your brain will appreciate the bonus omega 3.

### Do:

- ✓ **Eat more vegetables:** Research strongly shows that these foods help promote good gut bacteria and promote weight loss in the long term.
- ✓ **Try Sunday-night specials:** Weekends are a good time to give a new recipe a go, as you have a little more time

up your sleeve. Get online and type in a few ingredients you like then see what recipes turn up. Or hit a few bookshops and pick up some enticing new cookbooks.

- ✓ **Mix it up:** When choosing grains, don't just opt for white rice – try cous cous, and quinoa, wild or brown rice and soba or rice noodles. Eat different varieties of fish, such as yellowfin tuna, barramundi, perch, snapper, whitebait or jewfish – enjoy this steamed, poached, baked or grilled. Serve a vegetable like pumpkin, baked or mashed, not just boiled. Add different varieties of legumes like lima, black and butter beans or chickpeas to stews and salads. Changing staples like this will instantly give your meals a new flavour and texture and different mix of nutrients.
- ✓ **Be patient:** It takes around 66 days to firmly establish a new habit like eating more fruit every day according to research from the University College of London.

**RUT TYPE:**  
*Taste prejudice*

**DIRECTIVE:**  
Break the habit

**RUT TYPE:**  
*Fundamentalist clean eating*

**DIRECTIVE:**  
Introduce flexibility – by force if you have to

## BREAK THE HABIT

### Don't:

- ✗ **Live on salads:** If vegetables are your go-to foods for staying slim, have a wider variety to boost your fibre and nutrient intake.
- ✗ **Let guilt drive you:** Research at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand found that people who are guilt-ridden about eating treat foods such as chocolate cake are more likely to gain weight – most likely because they suffer emotional swings about food that increases the risk of episodes or whole periods of emotional overeating.

### Do:

- ✓ **Make sustainable changes:** Be realistic – cut back on carbs and sugar and takeaway and snack foods rather than completely cutting them out. Let your hair down: Studies show that the more you deny yourself a food, the more you will crave it and the greater the risk that sometime down the track, whether in weeks or months, you will get busy or stressed or tired of feeling deprived and throw healthy eating out the window.



**RUT TYPE:**  
*Sanctioned  
bingeing*

**DIRECTIVE:**  
Practise  
moderation

Every few weeks you give yourself permission to go nuts with all the foods you've been so 'good' to avoid (a-hem). So starts and maintains a pattern of splurging on family chocolate bars, takeout Thai and flavoured peanuts. You hardly do it every day; you reckon your metabolism will thank you. Reality check? Not so much. "Although your metabolism certainly does increase after a meal – which is a process called thermogenesis – it doesn't increase substantially more when you have eaten too much," says McGrice. "So the excess kilojoules from your binge may end up being stored as fat. Though this increase is minimal after one binge, over years of this behaviour the kilojoules can add up to weight gain."

## BREAK THE HABIT

### *Don't:*

- ✗ **Ignore your triggers:** "Anxiety, boredom, frustration or depression can be at the heart of emotional overeating," says McGrice. Write those triggers down, listing them in order from strong to mild, then draft strategies to counter them. Try a walk before dinner to unwind.
- ✗ **Eat close to bedtime:** Nighttime eating has been linked to greater disinhibition – possibly because evening food is perceived as a reward and the lack of distractions makes it easy to forget your bingeing has any real-world consequence. Need more? Late-night snacking may also increase body heat, which stops you falling asleep.

### *Do:*

- ✓ **Compensate wisely:** Rather than trying to eat next to nothing to level the caloric score, get back to a normal rhythm as quickly as possible. Eat regular meals, but to break what could become a pattern, favour whole foods with a balance of good fats, complex carbs and protein. A well-nourished body is less likely to encourage bingeing.
- ✓ **Always serve food on a plate:** That way you can't inhale a whole packet of biscuits without really noticing.



# *Taste Bud* **BOOTCAMP**

Hooked on sweet things or find vegies bitter? This rehab is so gradual you'll hardly notice it happening.

**B**ad news first: Compounding biological presets, conditioning also influences which foods we do and don't like. An aversive experience with a certain food – think throwing up due to a tummy bug around the time you ate the food – can cause the associated food to repel us. Similarly, nostalgia can bestow extra appeal on a food that might otherwise rate as neutral in the desirability stakes. "The more positive the emotional attachment a food has, the more we enjoy the taste of it," says Waters.

Now the good news. Like the brain, the palate is plastic. "Though

we tend to maintain a base of preference, such as eating meat or more vegetables or salty, spicy or sweet foods, we can manipulate our own taste buds to prefer healthier options," says Waters. Like changing which neural pathways dominate in daily life, overhauling food preferences takes concerted effort and practice, Waters says. Three to six months is a realistic timeframe for overwriting old food preferences. Practice may involve gradual exposure to flavours that seem unpleasant, she warns. "It may take up to 10 exposures to a new food or taste you don't like before you accept or actually start to enjoy it."





## CHEMICAL BROTHERS

There is merit to the notion that food manufacturers manipulate our experience of food by carefully engineering the balance of flavours, textures, macronutrients and even mouth feel. High-fat foods, for instance, create something like addiction. Repeated hits of saturated fats cause brain cells to become resistant to appetite-controlling hormones like leptin, so you no longer get the signal that your stomach is full according to research at UT Southwestern Medical Center. The effect lasts about three days, which is why you're likely to wake up ravenous a couple of days after an all-you-can-eat buffet dinner.

## SENSORY DETOUR

Connections between the way we experience flavour and smell are old news, but recent research suggests that the sight of food plays a role in flavour perception. "Now we are beginning to understand that flavour depends on parts of the brain that involve taste, odour, touch and vision. The sum total of these signals, plus our emotions and past experiences, result in perception of flavours, and determine whether we like or dislike specific foods," Cornell University's Terry Acree, Ph.D. was quoted as telling the American Chemical Society. People sometimes 'see' flavours before tasting them, he said, noting that the eyes were as – or more – important in flavour than the tongue and nose. When sauvignon blanc wine is tinted to the deep red of a merlot or cabernet, people taste the chemicals that produce the flavours associated with those wines – not the one in the glass, Acree said. The visual theory doesn't erase other aspects of flavour evaluation and can be overridden, Acree said, noting that curries and stews that look like vomit or faeces stimulated pleasant memories of the foods, effectively sidelining the visual component.

READY,  
SET,  
TWIST

**STEP 1** **Start slow:** If you struggle to eat bitter foods, try white cabbage rather than broccoli when first introducing more leafy greens to your diet.

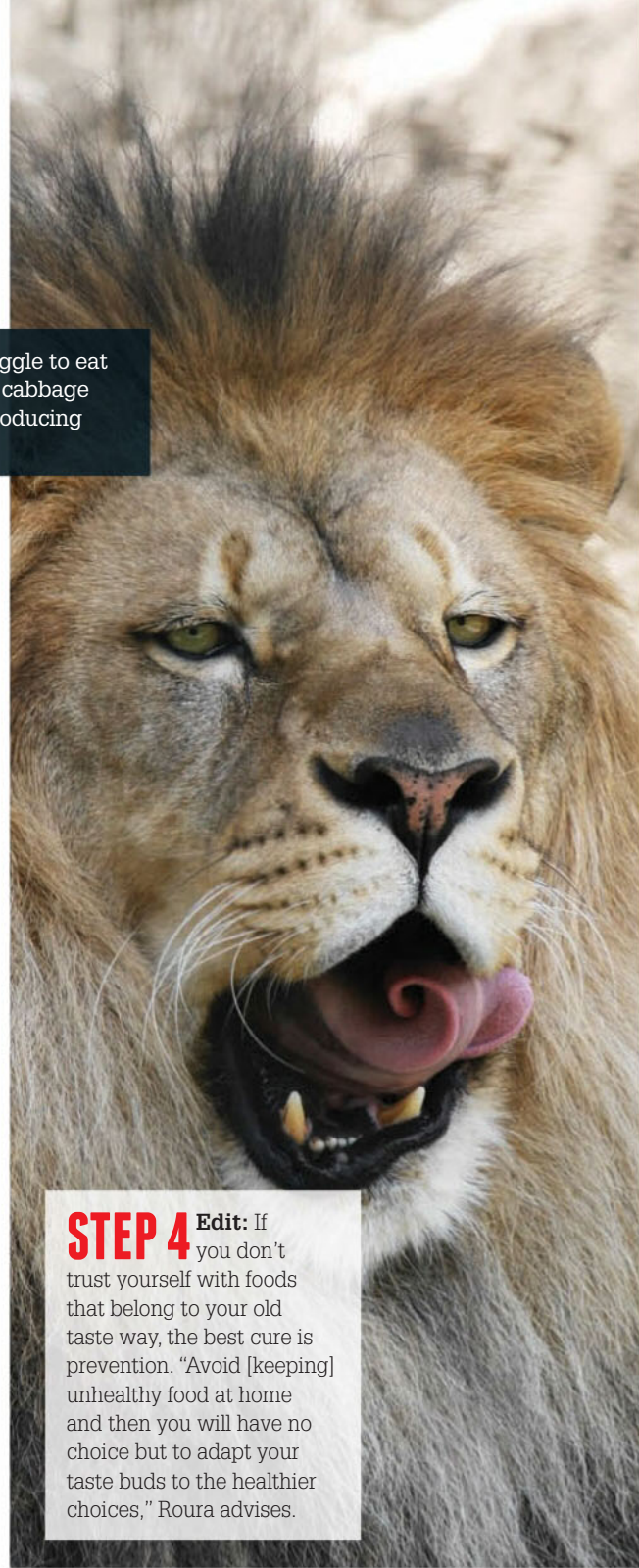
**STEP 2** **Quit warm turkey:** "Most people find reducing (not eliminating) foods like saturated fat, sugar and refined carbs works best if done gradually," says Waters. For example:

- » **Swap, don't stop:** If you're a Dairy Milk fiend, choose a healthier chocolate – think a six per cent cocoa dark chocolate – and build up over weeks/months to an 80 per cent one. Likewise, rather than trading white bread for wholemeal, try a white fibre-enriched bread, then a sandwich with one slice of white and one of brown to help you adapt to the taste and texture.
- » **Reduce sugary drinks:** Reduce sugar in your tea from two teaspoons to one then to half then to none. Start diluting juice with water until you only need a dash for flavour. Eventually, cut it out completely.
- » **Switch oils and spreads:** If you're trying to use less butter and more olive oil, start with one that has a light flavour.

**STEP 3** **Serve the same food different ways:** Not a fan of veggies? Start by grating them into meatballs or adding a few more to your stir-fry. Or use a different cooking method – for example, roasting your veggies with olive oil instead of simply boiling. This will give you different taste sensations and increase the chance that you will find one or two that make the food appeal to you more.

**STEP 4** **Edit:** If you don't trust yourself with foods that belong to your old taste way, the best cure is prevention. "Avoid [keeping] unhealthy food at home and then you will have no choice but to adapt your taste buds to the healthier choices," Roura advises.

**STEP 5** **Combine:** "When cooking at home, make healthy food taste great by combining tastes like umami (e.g. mushrooms or soy sauce) with sour (e.g. lemon juice)," says Roura. "This more complex taste stimulation is likely to enhance your fullness and satiety." In short, by mixing and matching a few different tastes in one dish or on one plate, you will get greater enjoyment from the food and feel more satisfied at the end of your meal. ■



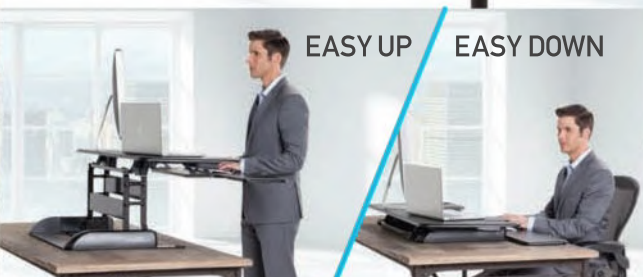


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# Clean Eating

2.0



The hyperbolic fervour for clean eating version one ignored many factors about whole foods. Consider this a system upgrade – with bonus how-to.

Words: David Goding

Calling a diet 'clean' implies that other diets are somehow 'dirty', which isn't exactly an accurate description of many foods verboten under the clean eating constitution (one must stay at least a kilometre from processed food). Moreover, the prohibitions of the mainstream clean eating movement tend to ignore edible perils more probable within a whole food diet and wax hysterical about stuff you're unlikely to find in a homemade tiramisu. In fact, a less melodramatic take on clean eating might better distinguish real from pseudo-risks.

"Cleaning up your diet means thinking about what you put into your body, and its effects on you," says Max Tomlinson, author of *Clean Up Your Diet: Change the Way You Eat*. "That goes for the kinds of food you eat (the Quarter-Pounder versus a lean breast of chicken), but also – and more importantly – the quality of the foods you eat."

We're not just talking about additives that may or may not send your oestrogen into a spin, or artificial sweeteners that derail your body's appetite regulation framework. Tomlinson's broader take on clean eating embraces not only nutrient value but also social responsibility.

"I would rather you ate a homemade Quarter-Pounder, containing 100 per cent organic, lean minced beef, fresh, organic herbs; and immune-boosting organic onion (with a free-range, organic egg to bind them together) than a chicken breast from a battery-farmed, non-organic hen, which is likely to be severely nutrient-depleted," he says.

Like its mimetically cultivated namesake, the new clean eating emphasises whole foods such as fruits and veggies, whole grains, beans and legumes and encourages cooking from scratch, but this time it gets a whole lot cleaner.

### Wholefood hygiene

You've got a hot dog on one side (dirty) and an organic apple on the other (very clean) but in between there is a lot of grey area. What you perceive as a clean diet may be someone else's idea of the eighth deadly sin. You need to find your own clean diet, and that means listening – mindfully – to your body.

In simple terms, clean eating is about basic foods, the less adulterated the better, which is easier said than done.



"These foods are the healthiest options in terms of the kinds of food that you choose to eat, but they are also grown, farmed or cultivated using the most nutrient-rich methods – organically, with the minimum amount of transport time and processing," says Tomlinson.

Pure foods are kinder on the body, easily digested and far less likely to lead to unhealthy weight gain than some of the foods on the deep-fried end of the spectrum.

"Although it sounds obvious, providing more of the nutrients your body needs to function optimally is the fastest route to improved health and wellbeing," says Tomlinson. "Pure foods are free from the additives and chemicals that in modern processed foods place such a strain on the organs of elimination, such as the liver and kidneys. They are also rich in essential micronutrients (vitamins and minerals, plant nutrients called phytonutrients, and other beneficial organisms, such as probiotics, or healthy bacteria), which they provide in a form that the body finds easy to absorb."

And finally, pure foods contain carbs (heaven forbid!), but they're naturally balanced, so you're not going to have hourly sugar spikes and your energy levels are going to be strong and stable throughout the day.

### Caveat emptor

If you're going to go ultra-clean, you'll be looking to buy predominantly organic, fresh, seasonal, and preferably locally grown produce. And it can be done.

Your local fruit and veg store often has organic options. Farmers' markets, too, provide an abundance of organic, fresh produce.

But one of the best ways to get your organic fix is to sign up to a 'box scheme', where your organic produce is delivered

regularly – at a certain day of the week or month – right to your door. You usually have some say in what you would like but there's usually some random seasonal fruits and vegies plonked in there for your surprise.

"Organic box schemes are springing up everywhere, with food taking a direct route from the field to the plate," says Lynn Huggins-Cooper, author of *Live Organic*. "Public support for locally produced, seasonal organic food is ever growing. People are thinking about food miles, and buying near to home boosts the local economy and reduces your carbon footprint. Consumers are becoming aware that shopping is an environmentally charged act."

Going organic does require a significant shift in thinking. It can be more expensive, and limits your usual food choices, but it also opens you up to different foods you may not have considered before – there's a whole world of tomatoes and mushrooms out there that never find their way onto supermarket shelves.

"You may want to go organic but it may seem overwhelming," says Huggins-Cooper. "Don't try to do everything at once. Start with the small things that fit into your daily routine. Before you know where you are, you'll find yourself living a healthier, simpler, cleaner life."

### Semi-clean

If you're not willing to go ultra-clean just yet, you can go semi-clean by adopting a clean eating diet with pure, whole foods, and turn your back on packaged foods and all those nasty takeaway options – but with regular, supermarket-bought fruits and vegies. Yes, they may arrive on the shelves after being picked unripe, sitting in cold storage and contain minute traces of pesticide residue, but by-and-large the Australian fruit and veg industry adheres to pretty



## Biodynamic guidebook

Biodynamic produce is organic produce with a bit of magic thrown in. Developed by Austrian Rudolf Steiner in the 1920s, biodynamic farming, and biodynamic consuming, is dictated by complex lunar and astrological cycles. The idea centres on the belief that harvesting, planting and sowing when the moon is in the ascendant is when a plant's sap rises (a good time for harvesting), and in the descendant is when the vitality is in the roots (open season for digging up root vegies).

strict standards compared to other countries.

It's unfortunate that companies aren't forced to list the precise chemical composition of the foods they sell. In many cases it may be difficult to determine. Pesticide levels can vary from tomato to tomato, from apple to apple. As many as six different residues have been found on a single sample of fruit. The highest number of pesticides have been found on apples, grapes, strawberries and tomatoes.

The highest levels of single pesticide residues have been found on peaches, pears, spinach, cherries, capsicum, celery, apples and apricots. The lowest pesticide levels have been found on avocados and sweet corn.

The good news is if you give them a good wash, you'll remove virtually all traces of the potential hazard from most fruit and vegies. But as for taste, seasonal, at the very least, will always win.

### Label libel

To be truly 'clean', not all packaged foods need be avoided, just most of them. Frozen peas and other vegies are a good option, sometimes even better than fresh, if out of season, as they are snap frozen when ripe. Canned beans are another good one, just make sure you wash the liquid off before using.

For other packed foods it's wise to be wary. If you're particularly scrupulous, you may need to reserve an entire day to examine the labels as you trawl the supermarket aisles for cleanish packaged foods. If your eyesight isn't that good, take a magnifying glass. Seriously.

Such products invariably list long scientific names or simply list the additive code – which, under further investigation, leads back to another long scientific name. Both have little meaning to the general public.

As Bill Statham states in *The Chemical Maze: Your Guide to Food Additives and Cosmetic*



**Ingredients**, “there is rarely, if ever, any indication on the label of the safety or otherwise of the ingredients that are used.”

Tens of thousands of chemicals are in use today, “many of which have never been proved to be safe either for humans or the environment,” says Statham. “A significant number have in fact been shown to be harmful to health in scientific tests conducted at universities and medical research centres around the world.”

As a rule, if a product lists more numbers or chemicals than real food ingredients, it definitely doesn’t classify as clean. Put it back on the shelf and keep walking.

### Local gear

To eat clean, many argue you’ll also need to avoid genetically modified foods, which, in Australia, is mostly found in imported ingredients and packaged foods. In fact, if you eat junk food, fried food, non-organic bread, baked food, soft drinks and anything containing non-organic flours, cooking oils and potato products, it is likely you have consumed GM ingredients. Keep an eye out for soya protein or maize on the label – if imported, there’s a particularly good chance it’s GM.

Buying Australian is the safest option. We have the most stringent, though complex and bureaucratically maddening, laws that make our fresh as well as packaged foods a cut above those from most other countries.

Look out for ‘Product of Australia’; this is the gold standard, and means that the ingredients are all Australian and manufactured in Australia, whereas ‘Australian Made’ means that at least some of the ingredients are imported.”

### Feelgood food

An implicit part of clean eating is making food decisions for the benefit of community as well as the planet.

“As more of us become concerned about living an ethical life, we need to scrutinise our food choices and trace them back to their origins,” says Angela Crocombe, author of *Ethical Eating: How to Make Food Choices that Won’t Cost the Earth*. “When we do, we discover that all is not right in the world of ‘conventional’ food.

“Our own health and the planet’s health are intimately connected. What destroys the land, congests the atmosphere and contaminates our waters is also doing the same to us. One positive side effect of eating with ethics in mind is that our

health often reaps the benefits as well.”

A big part of ethical eating is buying sustainable crops, grains and, in particular, fish.

“Many people assume that seafood is a more environmentally friendly option than meat, but unfortunately that’s not necessarily the case,” says Crocombe. “Overfishing is rife, with many fish species now extinct and others all but disappearing in the wild. Marine fish, such as bluefin tuna and certain species of shark, are not

only being fished to extinction but should also come with health warnings. These large fish are predators at the top of the food chain and as they eat smaller fish they ingest and accumulate large quantities of toxins that are potentially dangerous to humans.”

Good, sustainable fish choices include bream, flathead, whiting, trevally (not silver trevally) and leatherjacket.

### Clean cooking

Chuck that deep-fryer away and adopt clean cooking methods. Chief among them is steaming.

“Light steaming is the best way to cook vegetables and fish,” says Tomlinson. “Steaming is preferable to boiling as the food loses no minerals at all, and the process does less damage to the food’s fragile vitamins and enzymes.”

If you’re planning to use the liquid in, say, soup or sauce, boiling can be a great option.

Another top choice, and a distinctly underused option, is dry-frying.

“This is cooking without oil in a well-heated, non-stick frying pan. Add a little water and then add your meat, fish, chicken or vegetables. After a short while, meat and poultry release their own juices, providing plenty of moisture to prevent burning. ■

“As a rule, if a product lists more numbers or chemicals than real food ingredients, it definitely doesn’t classify as clean.”

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# Green screen

Super green powders are the virtuous beverage du jour, but do you know what's in them?

WORDS: LINDA SMITH

**I**n an ideal world we'd all be sitting down at every meal devouring a supersized bowl of lush green vegies and loving every forkful. Hello, sautéed spinach and braised broccoli!

But the reality is that some vegies, well, they're just not that enticing. The words 'delicious' and 'Brussels sprouts' don't typically go hand in hand. And even those of us who do have a penchant for kale or silverbeet often struggle to squeeze them into our busy, eat-on-the-run lifestyles.

So it's hardly surprising that green powders have catapulted themselves into kitchen cupboards, desk drawers and gym bags around Australia and the rest of the world as health conscious consumers attempt to bolster their intake of superfoods without the

need to munch through the supermarket's entire fresh produce section.

Chlorella, spirulina, wheatgrass and other 'super greens' powders are hot ticket items at supermarkets, pharmacies and health food stores. They are often hailed as being akin to a multivitamin on steroids, with one to two teaspoons a day fuelling the body with dozens of ingredients essential for health and wellbeing. And with celebrity endorsements from age-defiant supermodels including Elle Macpherson and Miranda Kerr, is it any wonder we're hungry for what they're having?

Look closely at the packaging and you'll see that each green powder comes with a set of bold claims. All promise a boost in overall wellness through

a concentrated dose of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Some even claim to ward off cancer, prevent premature ageing, boost energy, speed up weight loss or reduce the risk of heart disease and other nasties.

But are these superfoods really that magical? Can a sprinkling of green powder in a smoothie or shot glass really be the secret to fabulous health and longevity?

Naturopath and registered nurse Deb Ashton, who runs Synergy Holistic Health in Adelaide ([synhh.com.au](http://synhh.com.au)), believes green powders can be an efficient way to ingest useful nutrients in greater concentrations than those found in standard foods. They're readily available, easily absorbed and contain

a range of essential vitamins and minerals, Ashton says.

"I am a fan of them when they are part of a wellness plan for people who want to get more green foods in their diet," she says.

"There's a lot of nutrition in them...they are a really good option for people to put more nutrition in their diet without increasing calories."

The functional aspect of greens can also be harnessed to improve discrete health conditions according to Ashton. The medicinal aspect is particularly useful for people with sensitive guts and digestive conditions that can inhibit nutrient absorption and limit the span of foods consumed. Gluten sensitivity, coeliac disease, irritable bowel syndrome or other digestive issues can rob sufferers of nutrients found in greens concoctions.



# GREEN POWDERS DECODED

## Green versus green

As with any mass hysteria, the hype around greens ignores the fact that each body has different nutrition needs. Greens have assumed the sort of health halo that can disarm consumer discernment in the same way as gluten-free and low-fat claims, distracting from both the fact that each body has different nutrition needs and that there are myriad nuances in greens products.

Each green powder contains different combinations and concentrations.

Canberra dietitian Lisa Donaldson, who is part of the Michelle Bridges 12WBT support crew and runs Fitness, Energy, Education, Diet (feedinc.net), questions whether

## SPIRULINA

**What is it?** This ancient blue-green algae is basically a posh pond scum that grows in rivers and lakes. When harvested and dried, the spiral-shaped plant is a rich source of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. It was originally consumed in ancient times by the Aztecs and some African tribes but the rest of the world is now catching on to the superfood's superpowers.

**Why it's good for you:** Spirulina contains between 55 and 70 per cent vegetable protein (far more than beef, chicken and soybeans) and is packed with amino acids and far more beta-carotene than carrots or spinach. It's also full of iron, potassium, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, chlorophyll and a range of other health-boosting vitamins, minerals and nutrients. It is said to boost energy, aid digestion, improve immunity, balance the body's pH levels and support the heart, liver and kidneys by cleansing the body of toxins that may cause illness.

**Did you know?** In the USA, NASA has used spirulina as part of astronaut food in space, with plans to grow and harvest it in space stations in the future.

## CHLORELLA

**What is it?** Spirulina's tiny cousin, chlorella is a different variety of micro-algae – a spherical-shaped single-celled micro-organism that is green in colour. Although small (spirulina can be up to 100 times larger than chlorella), it still packs a big nutrient punch.

**Why it's good for you:** It is a sought-after food source because, when dried, it is about 60 per cent protein. A good source of iron, potassium, magnesium, phosphorous and immunity-boosting vitamins, chlorella is one of the world's richest sources of chlorophyll, which is considered to be a powerful cleansing agent for the body.

**Did you know?** Following fears of a human population boom in the late 1940s and early 1950s, chlorella was seen as a promising new primary food source offering a solution to the world hunger crisis. But despite extensive scientific research, the superfood didn't take off, only rising in popularity more recently.

## SUPER GREENS POWDERS

**What is it?** A supercharged powder full of leafy green vegetables such as kale, broccoli and alfalfa as well as ingredients such as wheatgrass, barley grass, spirulina and chlorella.

**Why it's good for you:** Some super greens powders claim to contain as many as 80 vital ingredients and the antioxidant equivalent of 10 serves of vegetables in just two teaspoons. Due to the alkalising nature of green foods, super greens powders are often used to detox, to restore a healthy acid-alkaline balance in the body while also boosting immune function.

**Did you know?** Studies have shown that people who consume at least seven portions of fruit and vegetables a day are 42 per cent less likely to suffer premature death than those who eat only one portion.

## WHEATGRASS

**What is it?** Commonly sold as a juice or powder, wheatgrass is – as the name suggests – a food derived from the common wheat plant. Like other green foods it contains chlorophyll, as well as a healthy cocktail of amino acids, minerals, vitamins and enzymes.

**Why it's good for you:** Wheatgrass is a good source of potassium, vitamins A, C, E and K, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, iron, zinc, manganese, selenium and dietary fibre and is said to assist with overall health and wellness. Many in the beauty industry praise wheatgrass for its ability to enhance the skin's beauty and slow the ageing process through internal cleansing and detoxification.

**Did you know?** Wheatgrass can be traced back in history over 5000 years to ancient Egyptian civilisations. But its consumption in the Western world didn't take off until the 1930s.

supplemental greens are merely producing expensive urine.

"Manufacturers claim they are more potent than a typical multi-v, but we must note that any water-soluble vitamins a body does not require will simply get excreted via urine," Donaldson says.

There's now a cluttered marketplace of powders containing "a range of green vegetables and aquatic plants that have been freeze-dried and then reduced to a powdered form", Donaldson says. "Some even include probiotics, enzymes and additional vitamins and minerals."

If you are in the market for a verdant boost, Ashton notes a difference between over-the-counter and practitioner-only products.

"When you go to a practitioner, they know exactly what's in the products," she says.

The method used to process the "delicate" algae, for instance, can influence nutritional merit. Too much heat can destroy some of the structures, Ashton warns. Fillers used to bulk up cheaper products can also mean some greens powders contain a fraction of the good stuff consumers think they're getting.

"It can have a huge impact on end product," Ashton says. "We want as much nutrition in supplements as possible."

She also warns that consuming green powders doesn't give you permission to leave traditional greens off your plate – or to skip meals.

"Green powders contain a lot of nutrition but they're not going to replace fruits and vegetables," Ashton says. While they are nutrient dense, green powders generally contain few kilojoules or macronutrients such as carbs, fat and protein. In other words, you still need to eat a balanced diet.

Donaldson doesn't advise clients to use powdered greens at all. "If you consume a balanced diet, these powders are not necessary," she says.



## Functional Smoothie Smorgasboard

Make your smoothie work double time with targeted ingredients that put your body into the right gear. (They taste amaze too.)

Words: Jessica Colacino

### Fat loss

**HERO:** Matcha (powdered green tea)

**TIP:** Unlike many ingredients with weight loss claims, green tea won't overstimulate the adrenal glands.

**ADD TO CART:** Okami Life Organic Matcha (30g), \$42, [okami-life.myshopify.com](http://okami-life.myshopify.com)

If your goal is fat loss, a smoothie containing 500 to 750 kJ is ideal. You want low GI and high-protein and fibre quotients to keep blood glucose steady and stave off hunger. As a base, try green tea, says nutritionist Dr Joanna McMillan ([drjoanna.com.au](http://drjoanna.com.au)). "Green tea increases general health and improves body weight by increasing the metabolism and the body's ability to burn fat," she says. In a study reported on in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, green tea extract was found to boost energy expenditure by around four per cent for each 24 hours.

#### — MAKE IT —

Matcha, or green tea powder, makes a great base for fat-loss smoothies. The high-protein, low-carb merits of natural yoghurt keep conversion to glucose under control, to stave off recurrent hunger, while chia seeds add fibre for digestive health and satiety. For a great fat loss smoothie idea, try:

- 1 tsp of matcha green tea powder
- ½ cup of ice
- ½ cup skim milk
- ½ cup of natural yoghurt
- 1 tsp of chia seeds soaked in 60 ml of water



### Workout fuel

**HERO:** Casein

**TIP:** To get the energy perks without potential gym-nausea, make sure the drink has left your stomach before you start training. The best way is to keep fat content low with minimal fibre, as fibre slows the rate at which your stomach empties, McMillan says.

Before a workout, McMillan recommends a banana smoothie made with a base of slow-release protein such as casein. Unlike whey protein, casein digests slowly, providing a steady supply of amino acids to sustain a workout. Carbs are also on the menu pre-workout according to McMillan. Eating carbohydrates before exercise has been shown to increase available energy, enabling higher intensity exercise. For recovery in the half hour following a gym session, however, switch to a whey protein smoothie, which will rush amino acids for recovery into your muscles.

**ADD TO CART:** Jalna Natural Low Fat Creamy Yoghurt (200g), \$2.10, [jalna.com.au](http://jalna.com.au)

#### — MAKE IT —

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 cup of skim milk
- ¼ cup of plain natural yoghurt
- 1 tbsp honey
- ¼ tsp of ground cinnamon



## Immunity

### HERO: Greens

**TIP:** Add a probiotic powder to boost your stomach's good bacteria, which McMillan says has been linked to immunity.

The average person will experience cold symptoms three to four times a year and while there's no cure for the common cold, there are ways to minimise frequency and symptoms. McMillan recommends a vegetable smoothie based on leafy greens, which are packed with magnesium and antioxidants. To boost its bug-fighting cred, she suggests adding echinacea, which was found in a University of Connecticut study to lower the chance of catching cold by up to 58 per cent and shorten a cold's duration by an average of 1.4 days. Adding ginger will infuse your veggie smoothie

with antibacterial and antiviral properties, McMillan notes.

**ADD TO CART:** Spinach leaves, market price, at your local greengrocer's

### — MAKE IT —

- 1 tsp echinacea
- 2 cups of baby spinach leaves
- 1 carrot
- ½ beetroot
- 2 sticks of celery
- 1 apple
- 1 knob of ginger
- 1 tsp wheatgrass powder
- Ice to serve (optional)



## Mood lift

### HERO: Raw cacao or pure cocoa powder

**TIP:** To offset the bitter taste of raw cacao or pure cocoa, add a ripe banana, which delivers sweetness without the blood sugar spike you'd get from sucrose. Next time you're tempted to reach for a king-size Toblerone when life doesn't play fair, expand your comfort food horizons and try a raw cocoa smoothie. Unlike commercial chocolate, which is largely fat and sugar, raw cacao and pure cocoa contain phenylethylamine, which was shown to elevate mood and produce a sense of wellbeing in a study published in the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry & Clinical Neurosciences*. But don't

expect it to taste like hot chocolate – the pure stuff is bitter. "Banana is another great ingredient to boost the slow release of carbs and potassium, and goes perfectly with cocoa," she says. Milk type is less important, with soy, almond and good old low-fat milk worthy options.

**ADD TO CART:** Power Super Foods Raw Organic Cacao Powder (125g), \$7.95, [shopnaturally.com.au](http://shopnaturally.com.au)

### — MAKE IT —

- 1 ripe banana
- 100 ml of almond milk or skim milk
- 2 tbsp of raw cacao or pure cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp of chia seeds soaked in 60 ml of water

### To blend or not to blend

To blend or not to blend?

That is the question. While green powder smoothies have become the portable brekkie du jour, according to Ashton, they're not optimal vehicles for green nutrients.

While a smoothie can mask the plant-like flavour and multi-tasks to save making an extra drink, Ashton believes that a simple blend of water and greens activates receptors in the mouth and throat and helps the body to absorb the nutrients faster.

"I actually think you need to suck it up and just get it down – it's not going to kill you," she says. The serving size is generally only a teaspoon.

“

*A simple blend of water and greens activates receptors in the mouth and throat and helps the body to absorb the nutrients faster.*

”

Donaldson doesn't object to augmenting a smoothie with greens if you feel it's beneficial, but the smoothie should be a complete meal in itself. The greens are a bonus.

"You can certainly add some green powder to your breakfast smoothie," she says.

"But you'd be better off blitzing some whole kale into your berry smoothie or serving some steamed greens with poached eggs at breakfast. This

way you benefit from the filling power of fibre that is lost in powdered greens."

### Powdered hazard

Most experts reason that while there's no definitive evidence for the usefulness of greens in an absolute, every-person sense, they're unlikely to do any harm.

However, as with all supplements and their use, there are caveats. Adelaide-based dietitian Tanya Lewis, who runs Life Personal Trainers ([lifept.com.au](http://lifept.com.au)), says that people with medical conditions or special dietary requirements should be especially careful when considering adding green powders to their diets.

"Spirulina is an algae; it is not a reliable source of B12 for vegans," she says (contrary to popular belief, vitamin B12 is not contained in plant foods but is actually a byproduct of the micro-organisms living on plants).

"It is high in vitamin K, so a person taking Warfarin or other blood-thinning medication should take caution before suddenly introducing it into their diet."

Green powders have also been known to contain artificial sweeteners, which can cause tummy upsets, as well as allergens like whey or soy and herbs that can be problematic for some people – especially pregnant women.

"Buyers should be especially careful and read the labels," Lewis says.

"Some of the products make big claims but do not offer the scientific backing behind them."

"There are some green powders that boast a large number of ingredients but on closer look, many of these ingredients in terms of actual food equate to less than a gram of real food."

"I would recommend a big bowl of vegetable and lentil soup for vitamins and fibre before a tablespoon of green powder." ■



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# SUZIE SOLBRANDT



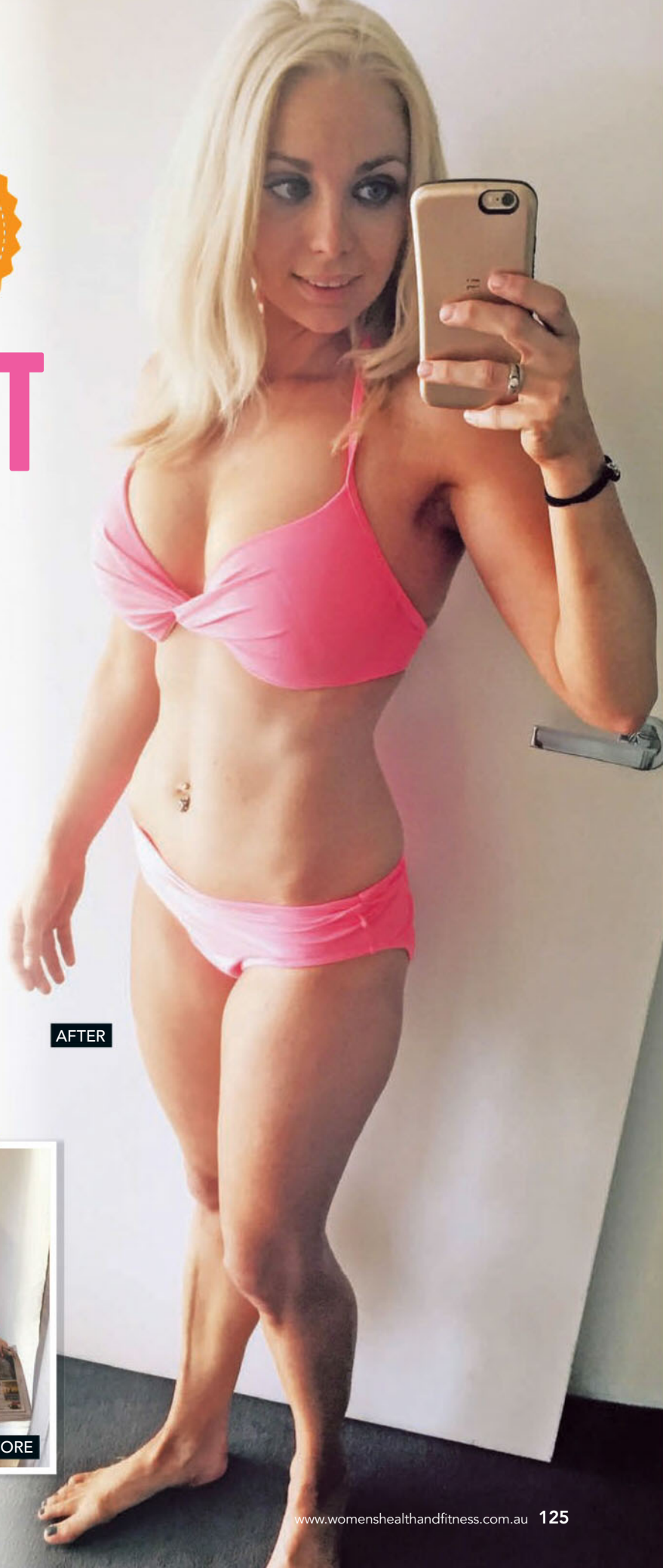
Suzie Solbrandt never thought she'd get her pre-baby body back. But by working in a healthy lifestyle around her bub and business, she has!

**I**n March last year I had my first baby, then in July my husband and I decided to buy a business. Being a nursing mum and running a new business was no easy task, I was eating on the go, bingeing and doing absolutely no exercise.

I realised I had been neglecting my own needs for the whole year. I had gained weight, my pre-pregnancy clothes didn't fit, I used to love exercising regularly but during this time it was the last thing on my mind. I was proud of my achievements but I wasn't proud of myself.

In December I decided to turn things around and take on the challenge. I started taking long walks with the pram in the mornings and switching up my meals for healthier options. After I finished breastfeeding, I took the opportunity to step up the training and dieting. I began going to the gym three times a week and eating healthy pre-prepared meals.

There were ups and downs throughout the challenge. I've always put my son first no matter what. When he was teething and in no state to be taken to crèche, I would skip the gym without question. Being a new mum certainly made the process much more challenging, but the results I achieved by taking the time to look after myself, my health and my body were phenomenal. I have rekindled my relationship with exercise and discovered a new



AFTER



BEFORE

passion for healthy, delicious food. In the past I had the belief that I had to kill myself in the gym and starve myself to see results. I've now realised that I can incorporate steady exercise and nutritious meals into my routine.

I can honestly say that this is the best I've looked and felt in my whole life. I thought pregnancy and childbirth would have ruined my chance of even dreaming about putting on a bikini again; I am proud to say I've proven myself wrong. I am extremely proud to have taken this journey and encourage every woman to do the same.

### On overcoming challenges

The first few weeks of the challenge I was still breastfeeding, so I had to ease myself into eating less without affecting my milk supply. And I started this journey less than two weeks before Christmas! My way of overcoming this potential diet disaster was to plan ahead and schedule in days where I would relax on the meal plan. As long as I was back on the wagon the next day, I was happy to indulge and enjoy my Christmas without guilt. The same went for my 30th birthday in February and any other special occasion that came up. I allowed myself to be flexible for a day or two, then after that it was back to business.

### On workout motivation

Seeing results kept me going. Once I started noticing changes in my body I became more and more determined to reach my goals. My husband was also a great support.

### On food swaps

Personally, I am a terrible cook. This became particularly apparent at the start when I was attempting to prepare my own meals for a whole week. My solution was to outsource, I have a friend who is a fantastic

cook and does her own meal prep every Monday. I supplied the food and she agreed to cook my weekly meals for me. Being extremely busy, this was a lifesaver. Not having to think about meal prep made the challenge so much easier. Preparation is the key to a good diet.

“ I HAVE REKINDLED MY RELATIONSHIP WITH EXERCISE AND DISCOVERED A NEW PASSION FOR HEALTHY, DELICIOUS FOOD. ”

### On treats

I love chocolate and anything sweet; I found chocolate-flavoured protein shakes got rid of my cravings. I allowed myself to have treats at parties, etc. but I always made sure I didn't go overboard and remembered my goal. I also allowed myself to have a glass of red every now and then.

### On measurements

I'm ecstatic! I'm so proud that I actually made such a dramatic transformation in only 12 weeks. When I started, I never thought the results would be so amazing. I actually look and feel better now than before I was pregnant, which I never thought would happen!

### On goals

I'm now working on toning up and thinking of getting a personal trainer to help me continue on my journey. My dream one day would be to step on stage as a fitness contestant. ■

## (H) WHAT I DID

- 3 x 1-hour brisk walk with pram weekly
- 3 x weight training sessions weekly
- 1x CrossFit session weekly (when able)

## (F) WHAT I ATE:

**BREAKFAST:** Oats with protein powder and a black coffee

**SNACK:** Handful of almonds or a piece of fruit

**LUNCH:** Steamed fish with salad or chicken breast with rice

**SNACK:** Protein shake

**DINNER:** Chicken breast with sweet potato mash and steamed broccoli



AFTER



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# HOW TO BE... Stephanie Rice

With five world records and three Olympic gold medals, Stephanie Rice has achieved a lot in her time as a professional swimmer. After retiring from the pool in 2014, she's turned her focus to fashion, food and wellness.

“Wearing exercise gear also helps with motivation...for some reason it encourages me to work out, so when possible I put it on first thing in the morning.”

I personally believe that anything to do with health starts with a shift in mindset. If you feel like you are restricting or depriving yourself in some way then it's usually not sustainable. Just making some small changes every day can help, but if you love coffee then have it and don't feel guilty about it.

I don't follow a diet as such and personally don't believe in them. I love the way healthy eating makes my body feel. I have grown up eating whole foods and home cooked meals, which I enjoy much more than something that is rich or unhealthy. I like knowing what goes in my meals. I love making big salads with roast veggies and nuts and seeds. I could eat that all year round.

I think that it's important to eat what best serves you and enjoy what you eat. I add a lot of superfoods to my meals and smoothies to up the minerals and nutrients, which also helps me to recover after workouts. I also think it's important to eat every three hours or so to make sure you sustain energy and cravings.

I try and listen to my body as much as I can. If I'm feeling run down and tired then I allow myself the day off or just to go for a little walk in the fresh air, because sometimes that really helps energise me more. I love a Sunday spent on the couch watching a movie or doing a puzzle with the family. It's my ultimate re-charge.

To stay motivated with regard to exercise it helps to actually put the clothes on in the morning; that way you

are ready when the moment takes you. I have been really conscious of that in my designs for our new Russell Athletic Platinum range, you can wear it from the gym to the café and it feels good. Wearing exercise gear also helps with motivation... for some reason it encourages me to work out, so when possible I put it on first thing in the morning. Other than that, I just love the feeling of working out and moving my body.

I love doing intense circuit sessions where I make up a series of four or five exercises and do each one for 45 seconds or so because it's a great challenge and it feels good to sweat.

My friends would describe me as cheeky, outgoing and never on time (I'm a big kid) but also thoughtful and loving.

My ultimate indulgence is chocolate and red wine!

I can't leave the house without lip balm, my Russell Athletic Fever warm-up jacket and, of course, my phone.

Beauty, to me, means fresh clean skin. So my top beauty tips would be to always take your makeup off before bed or working out, so that your skin can breathe and refresh, a great face moisturiser and lots of water. I also use coconut oil. I use it as a body moisturiser, hair mask, make-up remover, there is always a tub in my bathroom.

The best advice I've ever received was that everything happens for a reason and that you should try and learn from every experience, good or bad. ■





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